13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS RISE AGAIN THE INSIDE STORY!

MOJO '60s

CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

DYLAN 1965

20-PAGE SPECIAL

Plus

THE SONICS
GARAGE PUNK HEROES REBORN

COLTRANE
THE MAKING OF A LOVE SUPREME

THE BEATLES
THE FABS AT HOME

10 FABULOUS PIN-UPS

SCOTT WALKER
BRIAN JONES
FRANÇOISE HARDY
THE BYRDS & MORE

BOB DYLAN
DONT LOOK BACK
The MOST SHOCKING FILM of OUR GENERATION!
COLOR
RIOT ON SUNSET STRIP

2 *Art Prints Inside!*

"PAUL DANO IS UNCANNY AS THE YOUNG BRIAN WILSON."
-MIKE HOGAN, VANITY FAIR

"IT'S LIKE BEING INSIDE BRIAN WILSON'S CREATIVITY."
-ERIC KOHN, INDIE WIRE

"JOHN CUSACK GIVES ONE OF THE BEST PERFORMANCES OF HIS CAREER."
-JOHN DEFORE, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"FOR BEACH BOYS FANS THIS WILL BE AN OBVIOUS MUST-SEE."
-CHRIS BUMBRAY, JOBLO

PAUL DANO
IS BRIAN WILSON

JOHN CUSACK
IS BRIAN WILSON

LOVE & MERCY

MUSIC WAS HIS ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL

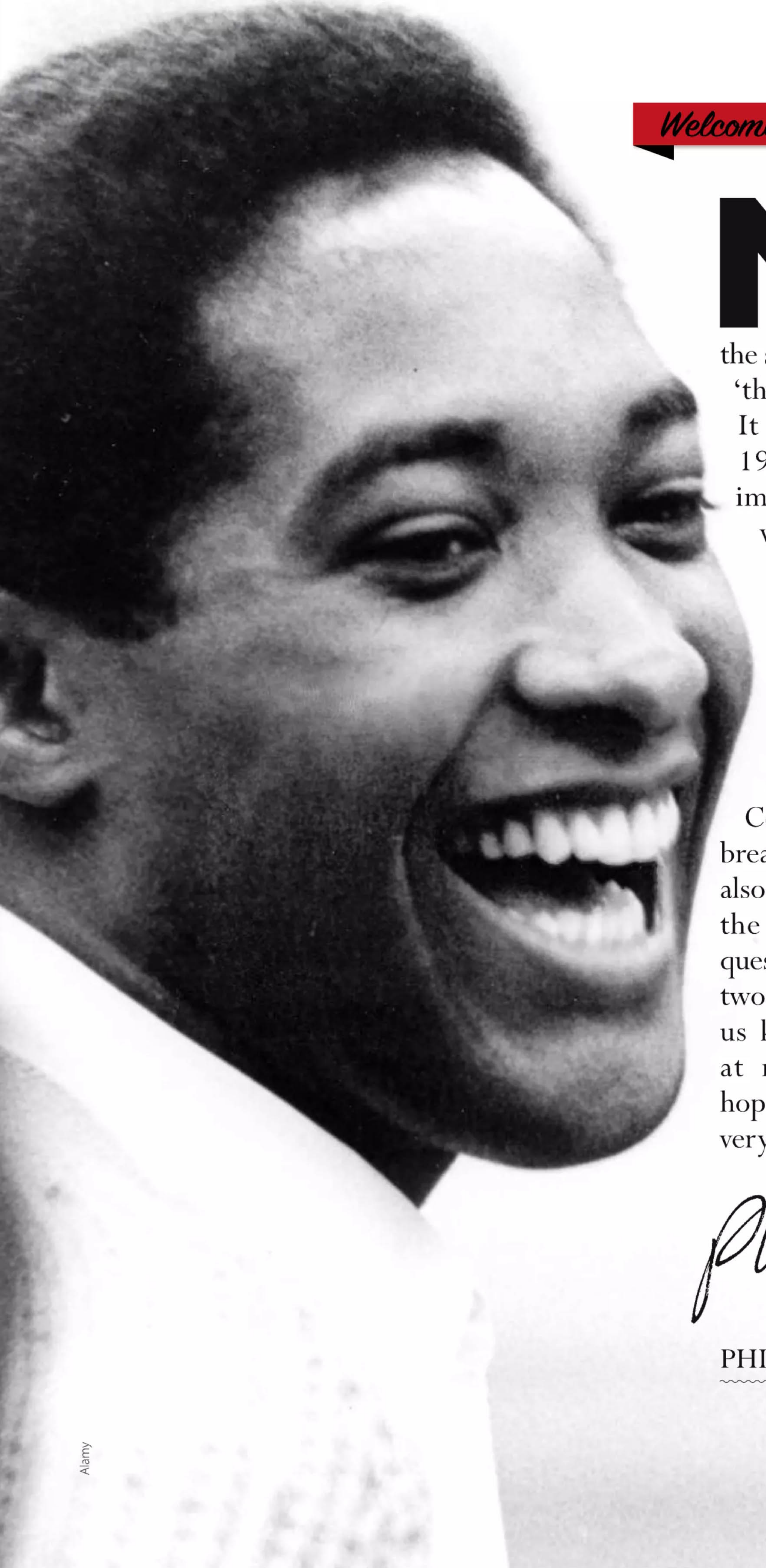
SONY PICTURES RELEASING INTERNATIONAL, STAGE 6 FILMS AND RIVER ROAD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A RIVER ROAD/BATTLE MOUNTAIN FILMS PRODUCTION JOHN CUSACK PAUL DANO ELIZABETH BANKS AND PAUL GIAMATTI "LOVE & MERCY" CASTING BY KERRY BARDEN AND PAUL SCHNEE COSTUME DESIGNER DANNY GLICKER SCORE BY ATTICUS ROSS EDITOR DINO JONSÄTER, SFK PRODUCTION DESIGNER KEITH CUNNINGHAM DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT YEOMAN, ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANN RUARK JIM LEFKOWITZ OREN MOVERMAN PRODUCED BY BILL POHLAD CLAIRE RUDNICK POLSTEIN JOHN WELLS BASED ON THE LIFE OF BRIAN WILSON #LoveAndMercy WRITTEN BY OREN MOVERMAN AND MICHAEL ALAN LERNER

© 2015 MALIBU ROAD, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
© 2015 SONY PICTURES RELEASING INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

DIRECTED BY BILL POHLAD

AT CINEMAS JULY 10

MOJO '60s
CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL



Alamy

Welcome Back!

MY, MY, IT'S BEEN A WHILE since we did this… Four years, in fact. Back in October 2011 we published the second issue of MOJO '60s. Then came 'the double dip' of the following year. It was almost like being in America in 1961 again! It also made it nigh-on impossible to continue our endeavours with this magazine. Thankfully, we are delighted to resume 'normal service' with this re-booted version of MOJO '60s. From our 20-page Dylan '65 special through to revelatory major interviews with returned garage-punkers The Sonics via major pieces on Sam Cooke, Hendrix and John Coltrane, we hope that you enjoy the breadth and the depth of this issue. We've also added a Pin-Ups section in tribute to the great magazines of the decade in question, and two art prints commemorating two very different movies. Please do let us know what you think by mailing us at mojo@bauermedia.co.uk, and we hope to be able to do this whole thing again very soon…

Phil A

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

65

18

58

What Goes On!

06 HIP HAPPENINGS...
The 13th Floor Elevators return, The Monkees in the spotlight, Ray Davies on Sunny Afternoon, and more.

Features

24 THE BEATLES
Rare pics of the Fabs at home.

30 THE PRETTY THINGS
Still crazy, still hairy, still like a drink.

38 JIMI HENDRIX
From his first, one-string guitar to his first recording contract, the full story.

48 SAM COOKE
His beautiful voice, his troubled soul.

58 THE SONICS
Garage punk never dies, it just gets louder – and makes a new album.

76 BOB DYLAN
Electric reinvention, the London trip.

96 GREAT US FOLK ALBUMS
Tom and Tim, Judy, Joan and Jean.

102 A TEENAGE OPERA
An ambitious producer, a lost classic.

108 JOHN COLTRANE
The hallowed road to *A Love Supreme*.

118 PRINCE BUSTER
The birth and the glorious long life of a sound system supremo.

124 DUKE REID
The brief reign of a rocksteady ruler.

Plus!

65 PIN-UPS
Beautiful people looking beautiful!

130 BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS
Marc Bolan stares you in the eyes in '65.

MOJO '60s
CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

Endeavour House,
189 Shaftesbury Avenue
London WC2H 8JG
Tel: 020 7437 9011
E-mail: mojo@bauermedia.co.uk
Website: mojo4music.com

Editor-in-Chief & Associate Publisher
Phil Alexander
Editor
Pat Gilbert
Art Editor
Giles Arbery
(@Wild Billy & Crazy Dave)
Sub Editor
Anna Wood
Picture Editors
Dave Brolan, Matt Turner, Ian Whent
Production Editor
Julie Emery
Production Manager
Andrew Stafford
Ad Production Manager
Kerry Beasley
Music Manager
Joel Hopkins
Film Account Director
Liz Harriott
Circulation & Trade Marketing Manager
Gareth Viggers
Business Analyst
Natalie Talbot
Managing Editor
Sophie Price
Publishing Director
Liz Martin
Managing Director, Lifestyle & Advertising
Abby Carvosso
Chief Executive
Paul Keenan

Thanks for their help with this issue:
Geoff Brown, Del Gentleman, Alan Kindell, Russ Moorcroft

Among our esteemed contributors:
Charles R. Cross, Paul Drummond, Ben Edmonds, Barney Hoskyns, Colin Irwin, David Katz, Bob Mehr, Mark Paytress, Andrew Perry, Peter Relic, Kieron Tyler, Lois Wilson
Front cover photo Alamy; back cover photo Rex

© All material published is copyright of Bauer London Lifestyle Ltd. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the prior permission of the publisher. MOJO accepts no responsibility for any unsolicited material.

MOJO Subscription Hotline
0844 8488872
For subscription or back issue queries contact CDS Global on Bauer@subscription.co.uk
To access from outside the UK
Dial: +44 (0)1858 438760

Alamy (2), Getty.

Cambridge Folk Festival

FEATURING

Joan Baez * * * Passenger * * * Frank Turner
Joan Armatrading * The Proclaimers * Punch Brothers
John Butler Trio * Nick Mulvey * Wilko Johnson
The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain * The Unthanks
Show of Hands * * Katzenjammer * * Altan
Treacherous Orchestra * * * * Gretchen Peters
The Skatalites * * * * Danú * * * * Stornoway
Martin Simpson, Andy Cutting & Nancy Kerr
Rhiannon Giddens * Shooglenifty * Peggy Seeger
*** Bella Hardy * * * * Alvin Youngblood Hart ***
Amsterdam Klezmer Band XL * * The Lone Bellow
*** Chris Smither * * * * Angaleena Presley ***
*** * * * Josienne Clarke & Ben Walker * * * ***
Skinny Lister * * Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino
The Demon Barbers XL * * Jim Moray's Silent Ceilidh
Keston Cobblers Club * The Stray Birds * Rura
Olivia Chaney * Goitse * De Temps Antan * Lynched
Ben Miller Band * * * Blackbeard's Tea Party
Brian McNeill * The Willows * CoCo & The Butterfields
Fara * * * Mawkin * * * The Elephant Sessions
Hannah Sanders * * 3Sticks * * Jaywalkers
*** * * Children's Concert with David Gibb * * ***

CLUB TENT SHOWCASES

Kim Churchill * Stick In The Wheel * Ange Hardy
Sam Kelly Trio * Mishaped Pearls

THE DEN

Ward Thomas * Seafret * Ciaran Lavery
Hattie Briggs * Sorren Maclean * Threepenny Bit

Saturday Tickets Sold Out

30th JULY—2nd AUGUST 2015

LIVE AT **CHERRY HINTON HALL**

www.cambridgefolkfestival.co.uk

www.facebook.com/cambridgefolkfestival www.twitter.com/camfolkfest cambridge1965

Promoted by CAMBRIDGE LIVE

Supported by Cambridge City Council

Madcap: The Movie

Syd Barrett to be profiled in new documentary, with contributions from Pink Floyd and Hipgnosis.

"SYD BARRETT FOR ME IS AN ICON IN EVERY WAY," SAYS Roddy Bogawa, director of a forthcoming documentary detailing the extraordinary story of Pink Floyd's enigmatic first leader, who died in 2006. "His look, his songwriting, his riding the cusp of psychedelia – the fact that, as some people say in the film, he was destined for mythical status."

Have You Got It?, named after the non-existent song that Syd once mischievously tried to 'teach' his confused bandmates, was begun under the auspices of Pink Floyd's storied sleeve designer and Hypgnosis art guru Storm Thorgerson, who grew up with the group in Cambridge. When Thorgerson died in 2013, Bogawa took charge of the film, which promises new insights into Barrett's mercurial career, breakdown and subsequent retreat from public view via interviews with key characters in his life including the Floyd's David Gilmour, Roger Waters and Nick Mason, and girlfriends Jenny Spires, Lindsay Korner, Gayla Pinion and Libby Gausden.

"Have You Got It? is truly unique and has as an intimate quality that the other films about him haven't been able to capture," says Bogawa. Expect it in late summer…

Getty

Lava boys: (from left) Roger Waters, Syd Barrett, Rick Wright, Nick Mason.

"We finished in fine spirits": the Elevators (from left) Eli Southard, Roky Erickson, Tony Hall, Fred Mitchim, Ronnie Leatherman.

Exclusive

They've Got Levitation

The 13th Floor Elevators were the pioneers of psychedelic garage rock whose reign ended in a mess of prison sentences and mental illness. Paul Drummond was there to watch their unexpected and dramatic reunion in a Texas field.

It's the psychedelic event of the century, but already there are warning signs. As a vast international audience prepares to fly in for the Levitation Festival (previously the Austin Psych Fest) in Austin, Texas, to witness the first ever 'proper' reunion gig by '60s psychedelic legends The 13th Floor Elevators, a tornado warning is issued. A raging storm is forecast at the band's allotted show time. If the extreme weather warnings aren't terrifying enough, the old band dynamics are adding to the drama. Days before the show, drummer John Ike Walton's participation was looking shaky and a replacement was already in rehearsal. Given that Walton's unique style is so integral to the band's sound, it wouldn't be the Elevators without him.

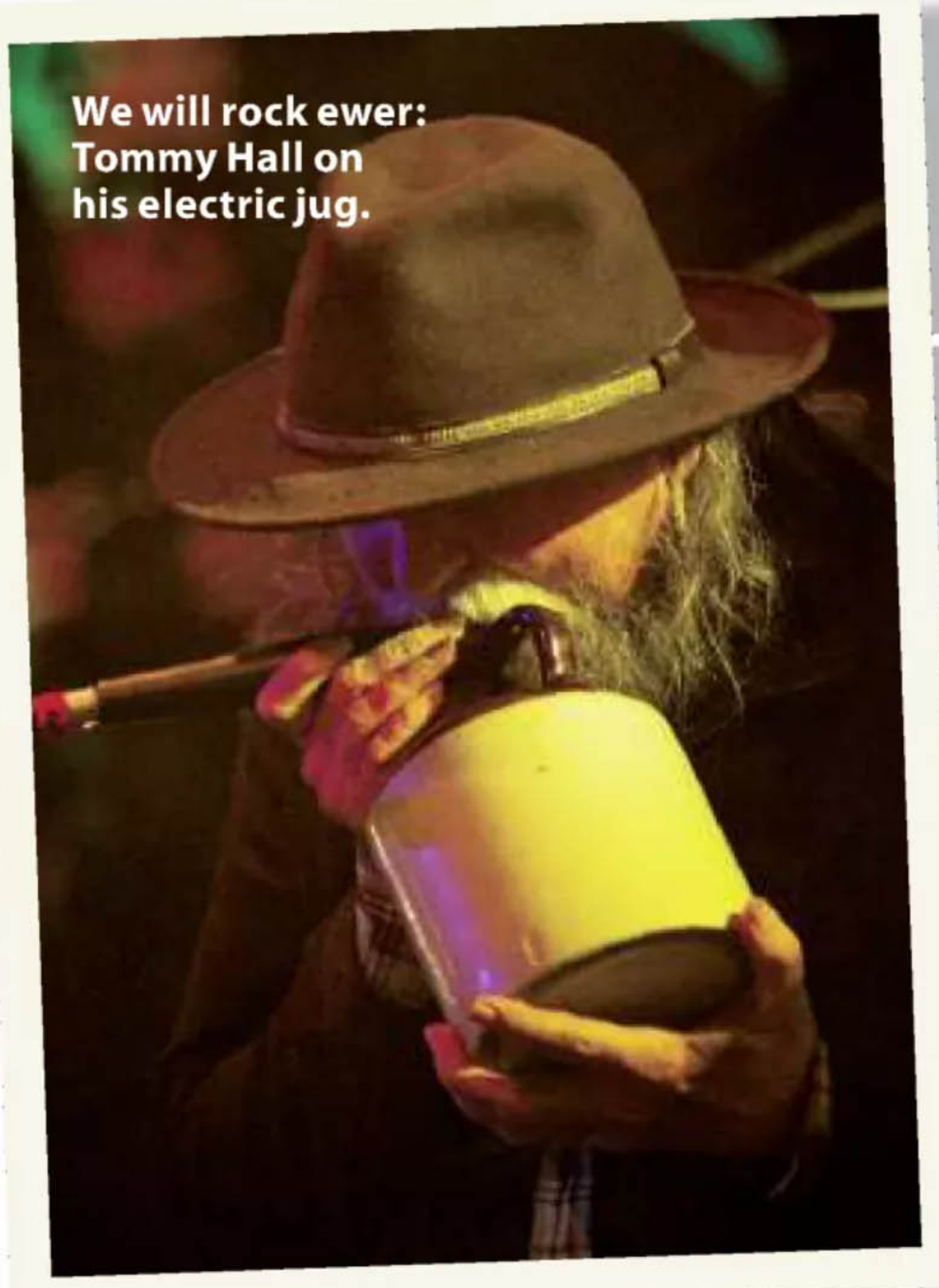
The band lost their original lead guitarist Stacy Sutherland in 1978, when he was accidentally shot by his girlfriend. Sutherland suffered premonitions during bad trips that the band's music was channelling satanic forces. Two other former members, now both deceased, also warned of a hex on the band. Is this reunion destined not to happen?

The last known show attempted with all three key members – Sutherland, singer Roky Erickson and electric jug player Tommy Hall – was at the Safari, a club in Baytown, Texas on July 11, 1968. John Ike's replacement Danny Thomas was hauled off by the police and Roky was sent for a "rest" by the record company to a private medical centre, where he was given electric shock treatment on his 21st birthday.

For the band responsible for coining the phrase 'psychedelic rock', the '60s ended diabolically. Stacy was incarcerated by the prison system that Roky pleaded insanity to avoid, only for Roky to meet a worse fate in a maximum-security unit for the criminally insane. Tommy hid with the notorious hippy mafia, the Brotherhood Of Eternal Light, in a cave the on Laguna Beach (where Timothy Leary was arrested in 1968), before also serving time. Bassist Ronnie Leatherman was drafted to Vietnam and John Ike was treated for manic depression. No wonder it's taken years for the memories to fade enough to relive the 'good old days'.

With some trepidation, I venture to the band's final rehearsal the day before they play. Die-hard fan and long-term friend Fred Mitchim is leading the final run-through before Roky arrives. The muffled vibrations through the studio doors are recognisably the sound of the Elevators. The drama continues. Tommy's carefully structured setlist, designed for maximum semiotic effect, is meeting with rebellion in the ranks.

Two songs need switching and Roky's son Jegar, who is stage-managing the reunion, delivers the bad news. Tommy grumbles ➢



We will rock ewer: Tommy Hall on his electric jug.

"They used to drop LSD before each show."

about being "too stoned" and leaves early. Back in the day, Tommy used to insist that everyone (except John Ike) dropped LSD before each show so they could "play the acid" and heighten his lyrics. The Elevators were a formidable live act in the mid '60s, thanks to the extreme volume and the Erickson's banshee-like scream interweaving with Ronnie's basslines and Tommy's oscillating jug. Meanwhile, Stacy's reverb-drenched guitar invoked the power of an earthquake.

Roky now tours with Jegar's band The Hounds Of Baskerville and, as Erickson's longest serving guitarist, Eli Southard is the natural choice to recreate Stacy's musical alchemy. When Roky arrives and takes over vocals duties, I am relieved to conclude that, yes, this might just work…

The next day, May 10, the band go straight in at the deep end as shouts go up from the 10,000-plus crowd. As John Ike strikes up the beat to She Lives (In A Time of Her Own), you can almost see people struggling with the sensory overload: yes, it really is The 13th Floor Elevators and, yes, they really are that good.

The sound team takes a couple of songs to get the mix right, but on-stage, where MOJO is standing, there is no mistaking the raw sound and energy. Buzzing off the crowd, Roky delivers one of the most engaging performances I've witnessed since his return to live appearances 10 years ago. The sight and sound of the electric jug brings cries of "TOMMY HALL!" from the disbelieving crowd. Ronnie and John Ike remain a faultless rhythm section throughout, and everyone is full of praise for Eli's guitar work.

Slip Inside This House, arguably the band's most important song, strikes home, but Roller Coaster is the show-stopper. After an encore of You're Gonna Miss Me, Tommy, having delivered his psychedelic sermon, walks off knowingly tapping his head.

"Astounding", "epic" and "formidable" are among the adjectives overheard. It seems like the Elevators' performance has indeed succeeded in making the audience high.

Will they do it again? There's certainly no shortage of potential promoters. "We finished in fine form and fine spirits," says Hall, although as soon as the show's over, John Ike is harbouring old resentments: "We don't need no stinking jug muddying up our good music," he complains. "Never did!"

The following dawn, all hell breaks loose as the heavens open and that promised storm arrives. But by now, somehow, the Elevators have managed a triumphant return.

Food for thought: Roky chats with GOASTT's Sean Lennon and Charlotte Kemp Muhl.

Five go mad in Carnaby Street: with Steve Ellis looking Mod on the right.

Anthologised

All Or Nothing

One of the biggest British bands of the late '60s, The Love Affair were made to be broken. As a new anthology hits the racks, Phil Alexander hears the young Mods' forgotten story.

They were a bunch of R&B-fixated teenagers from north London, smoking the fag-ends of Mod-dom to the filter, and playing soul covers of Garnet Mimms, Eddie Floyd and Lee Dorsey in any club that would have them. Known as The Soul Survivors, they rehearsed hard and dreamt of the big time. And then, in what is an archetypal '60s yarn of exploitation and industry machinations, their dream came true – but with disastrous consequences.

For a start, vocalist Steve Ellis, keyboard player Morgan Fischer, guitarist Ian Miller, drummer Mo Bacon and bassist Warwick Rose were renamed The Love Affair.

"Apparently there was a band with the same name in America, so we had to change it," recalls Ellis. "But I hated it because it just didn't suit us."

Ellis also struggled with the managerial insistence that they should wear psychedelic finery from The Carnaby Cavern, bolero jackets replacing the sharp suits he favoured. Then there was the small matter of the band's shift in musical direction.

After the failure of their cover of the Stones' She Smiled Sweetly in November '66, they were presented with Robert Knight's Everlasting Love. Now signed to CBS and effectively moulded by them, they recorded the track with producer Mike Smith and musical director Keith Mansfield. Topped by Steve Ellis's remarkable soulful vocal, the final version of the song saw the band replaced by session men, a 40-piece orchestra contributing to the track's lush, epic feel.

"We admitted that the band hadn't played on the single and we got slaughtered for it," cringes Ellis. "People thought we were manufactured."

Misconceptions aside, the track – released in December '67 – climbed the UK chart, reaching the top spot in February. Further hits followed: Rainbow Valley, A Day Without Love, One Road and Bringing Back The Good Times.

"Suddenly we had an audience of screaming teenage girls and it all got a bit Beatle-y," he says. "Everything melted into hysteria. At one gig in Swansea we couldn't hear what we were playing because we only had a 200-watt PA – which was all you had in those days. I thought to myself, This is not us anymore. I looked at the audience and started singing, 'Everlasting Bollocks!' The only people who could hear us were the security, who wet themselves."

In Ellis's opinion, the band never recorded a 'proper' album – 1968's *The Everlasting Love Affair* being little more than a showcase for their singles. As music got heavier, the band felt trapped and, after 18 months of toil, Ellis quit. An attempt at a solo album for CBS was shelved as the singer put together a band bearing his own name with keyboard player Zoot Money. "It was commercial suicide!" he laughs.

Today, Ellis describes Everlasting Love as "the perfect record, I'll never better it" and is proud that The Love Affair's material has just been anthologised by RPM Records. *The Love Affair & Steve Ellis: Time Hasn't Changed Us* is a fine 3-CD set that packs in everything the band recorded for CBS as well as his unreleased solo album.

As we bring our conversation to a close Ellis is heading to Black Barn Studios to record tracks with his friend Paul Weller for what he says will be an "earthy" new album. "It has to be. That's the only kind of music I like."

THE LOVE AFFAIR
STEVE ELLIS
TIME HASN'T CHANGED US
The Complete CBS Recordings 1967-1971
RPM

"It all got a bit Beatle-y. Everything melted into hysteria."

Elevators photography Paul Drummond, Rex

Mickey Dolenz

The Monkees' drummin' and singin' free-thinker on beatnik coffee shops, making long hair acceptable, sitting in on *Sgt. Pepper*, and seeing Jimi Hendrix booed off stage. Interview by Lois Wilson.

You and Peter Tork are playing shows as The Monkees in the UK in September. What can we expect?
We'll do the hits like Last Train To Clarksville, Pleasant Valley Sunday, I'm A Believer and last time we were in the UK we did lots of songs from [1968 psychedelic Monkees movie] Head; I love singing those songs – so we'll probably do some of them again. We've always prided ourselves on having multimedia live. We were one of the first to bring multimedia on the road with us in the '60s. We took a motion picture screen out of a cinema and big projectors, too, and we showed excerpts from the TV show and home movies. Now it's so easy to do that because nearly every venue has a screen. We used to have to carry everything around with us, now we bring a laptop and files.

You mention the film Head. Looking back now, what do you think of it?
It's a brilliant film and there's a scene that sums up the theme of the whole movie for me, where Mike [Nesmith] and I are dressed as the cavalry, and we're being attacked by the Indians and I get hit by a bunch of fake arrows, and I say, "That's it Bob [Rafelson, director], I've had it, I'm through with all this, the fake arrows, the fake sets, the fake this and that, I'm out of here." I pull out the arrows and storm off to the back of the set and walk through the backdrop of the Wild West and I break out of the movie. I think that was metaphorical, we were breaking out of the Monkee formula and breaking out of that old Hollywood system. Because the directors went on to make Easy Rider using some of the money from The Monkees, which along with Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull created the independent Hollywood film industry.

When did the '60s start for you?
I came of age at the tail end of the '50s beatnik era and I remember going to the Omnibus, this club in LA, where they sold coffee, and everyone was in there reading Kerouac and Ginsberg and snapping their fingers, playing guitar, and talking about this new kid in Greenwich Village called Bob Dylan. Out of this beatnik mentality and zeitgeist, the '60s came along, we got the Brit Invasion, then the hippy experience. It was a morphing, the '60s didn't come out of the blue.

You went to the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967. What are your memories of it?
It was a very last-minute thing, I was working and I almost didn't get to go. But I got away and showed up in an Indian headdress, and it was just like a big party. It was after seeing Jimi Hendrix play there that I suggested that he'd make a great opening act for us.

Dolenz today: "The only time you saw long-haired kids before The Monkees they were being arrested."

I LOVE MICKY
Micky
The Monkees MICKY DOLENZ
MONKEES
MICKEY

"The Sgt. Pepper session was just four guys sitting on folding chairs."

When did Hendrix first appear on your radar?
The first time I saw him he was Jimmy James and a sideman with John Hammond in New York at the Gaslight. I went down there one night and a friend said to me how I'd got to see this guy who plays guitar with his teeth. I didn't even know his name and then the next time I saw him was at Monterey and it was like, "Oh, I recognise you." He was very theatrical and colourful at Monterey and I saw the similarity straight away with The Monkees who were also very theatrical and colourful. The fans didn't react well when he supported us, they were there to see us and booed Jimi off. Crazy.

How did you relate to the counterculture?
Timothy Leary wrote a book, The Politics Of Ecstasy, and he talked about The Monkees, about how we brought long hair into the living room and made it acceptable. The kids could say to their parents who were objecting to the counterculture, "Look, Mum! Look, Dad! The Monkees have long hair and they're not committing crimes against nature." The only time you saw long-haired kids before The Monkees, they were being arrested. The Monkees did to long hair and hippy counterculture what the Fonz did in Happy Days for bike gangs and Will Smith did for rap in The Fresh Prince Of Bel Air.

What do you remember of sitting in with The Beatles during early *Sgt. Pepper* sessions?
I particularly remember being at the tracking session for Good Morning Good Morning. I was over doing a press junket for our forthcoming tour and I met Paul and he invited me over to Abbey Road studios. I got all dressed up, expecting a crazy love-in freakout happening and I showed up in hippy garb. I looked like a cross between Ronald McDonald and Charlie Manson, and it was just the four guys on folding chairs and George Martin in the booth and they're all working.

Tell me about writing Randy Scouse Git.
I wrote it in Grosvenor House hotel after a party and it was a stream of consciousness about everything that was going on in my life at the time. I named it Randy Scouse Git. I didn't know what it meant but I had been watching [BBC TV comedy] 'Til Death Do Us Part and the Alf Garnett figure, he called the kid in the show a "randy Scouse git" and I just thought it sounded funny. When I got back to the States, the UK record company got in touch saying they wanted to release the song as a single. But the thing was they said we had to change the title as it was rude. They said it translated as 'horny Liverpudlian jerk', so we had to come up with an alternate title. So I said, "OK, that's what we'll call it then, Alternate Title." And they went for it!

The Monkees featuring Micky Dolenz and Peter Tork play London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo on September 4.

Alamy

...Dr King Was Shot

Soul star and Memphis native **William Bell** was driving to the Stax studio on the evening civil rights titan Dr Martin Luther King was killed at the city's Lorraine Motel. He recalls the eerily empty roads, the shock and anger, and the pleas for calm. Interview by **Bob Mehr**.

Date: April 4, 1968

Event: The assassination of Dr Martin Luther King at the Lorraine Motel in downtown Memphis, Tennessee. King had been speaking out in support of striking African American sanitation workers when he was murdered by James Earl Ray.

Eyewitness: Stax artist William Bell.

"I had met Dr King a couple times. Once at the airport in Atlanta – we flew to Memphis together and talked briefly. I met him and Mrs King and the whole family, actually. And later, I did a couple concerts to help raise funds for his organisation.

The day of the assassination, in fact, moments after Dr King had been shot I was passing through downtown, coming from North Memphis, where I lived. I was heading toward Stax Records in South Memphis. What I remember, what was so strange, was that all the lights were green. I drove all through the city on Second Street without having to stop, which was very unusual.

As I got towards downtown, you could hear all these sirens. I didn't realise what was going on yet. I thought maybe there was a fire or someone had been in a bad wreck. I didn't know Dr King had been shot at the Lorraine Motel.

Of course, everyone at Stax knew the Lorraine, it was kind of a hangout. We did a lot of songwriting there. We would book a suite of rooms, write songs, then take a break and swim in the pool and then go back and write some more. So we were very familiar with the Lorraine.

William Bell: "People were in total shock, and angry."

"It was hard to swallow – such a horrible thing had gone down in our city."

When I finally pulled up to Stax, that's when I found out what had happened. They had the radio on and were listening to the first news reports. Initially, they said Dr King was shot but they didn't say he was dead. As the evening wore on, they finally made the announcement that he'd been killed. When that happened it was just chaos – people were all over the place, out in the streets and everywhere else. People were in total shock, and angry. It was a horrible thing to experience that moment.

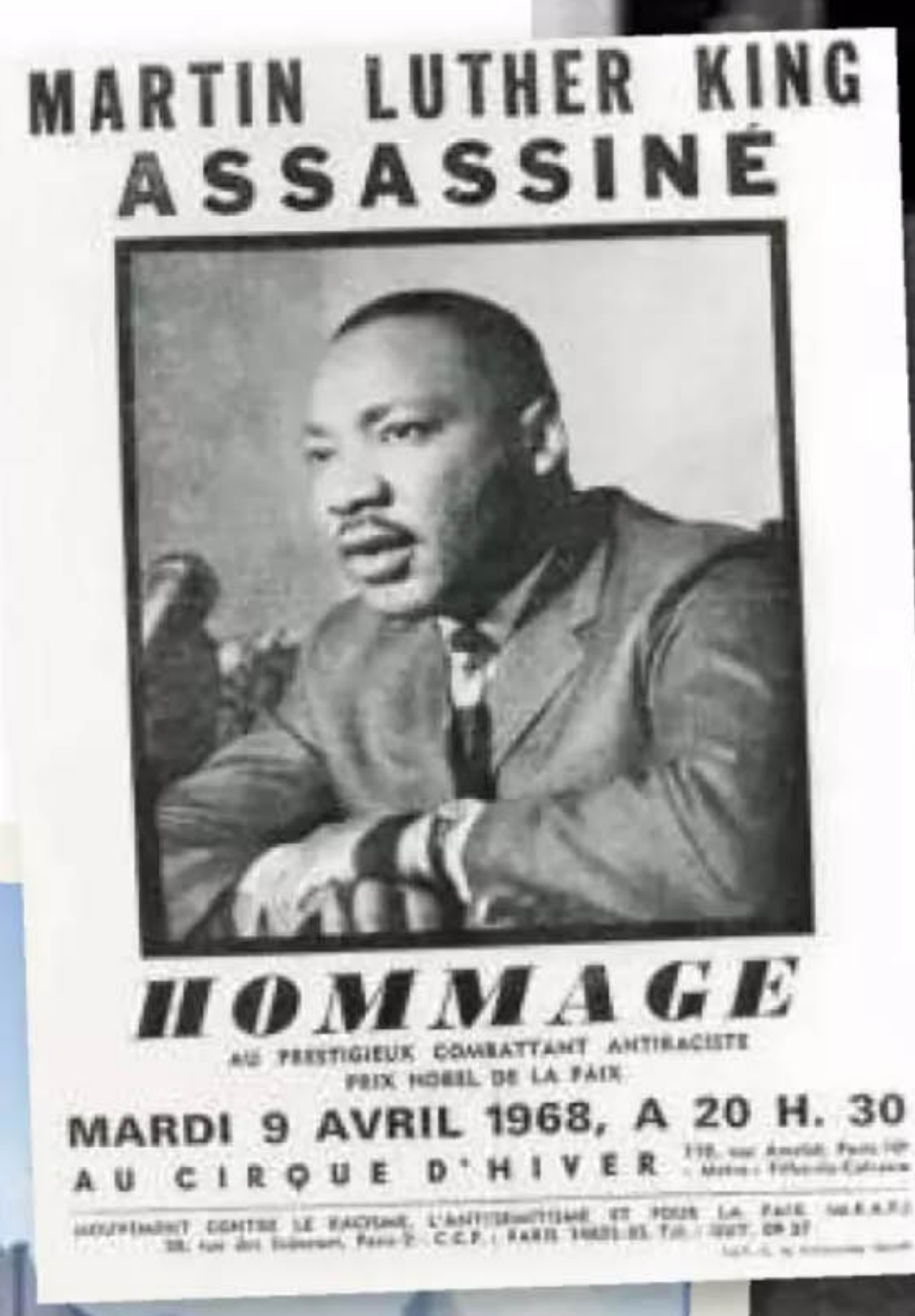
I managed to make it back home to North Memphis and turned the TV on. The city was in an uproar. Rioting was breaking out in different areas at the same time. That night, they were trying to stop some of the rioting so they asked myself, David Poster, Isaac Hayes and some of the other Stax folks to go on the radio to try and calm the people down.

In the period after the assassination, there was a lot of hostility from the black community around Stax. When we came back to the studio days later, we actually had to chaperone [Stax's white artists] Duck Dunn and Steve Cropper a little bit, and basically calm the neighbourhood guys down. We told them, 'No, these guys are with us, they're part of us.' Remarkably, Stax was the only building on that block that was untouched when the rioting stopped. They had enough respect for what we were doing, and us, and Stax itself.

From my perspective, after Dr King's death everything just changed. Not so much from the standpoint of Stax – because we totally were like a family there, black and white. But it was just a feeling of 'How could this happen? How could this happen in Memphis?' There was a sense in the black community that it was a conspiracy, that there was a lot of help from the powers that be for that assassination to have taken place. It was never proven. But it was hard for people to swallow it, that such a horrible thing had gone down in their city.

Looking back now, when I recall that day, I get an eerie feeling. Just thinking about driving down Second, past the Lorraine and seeing all those green lights."

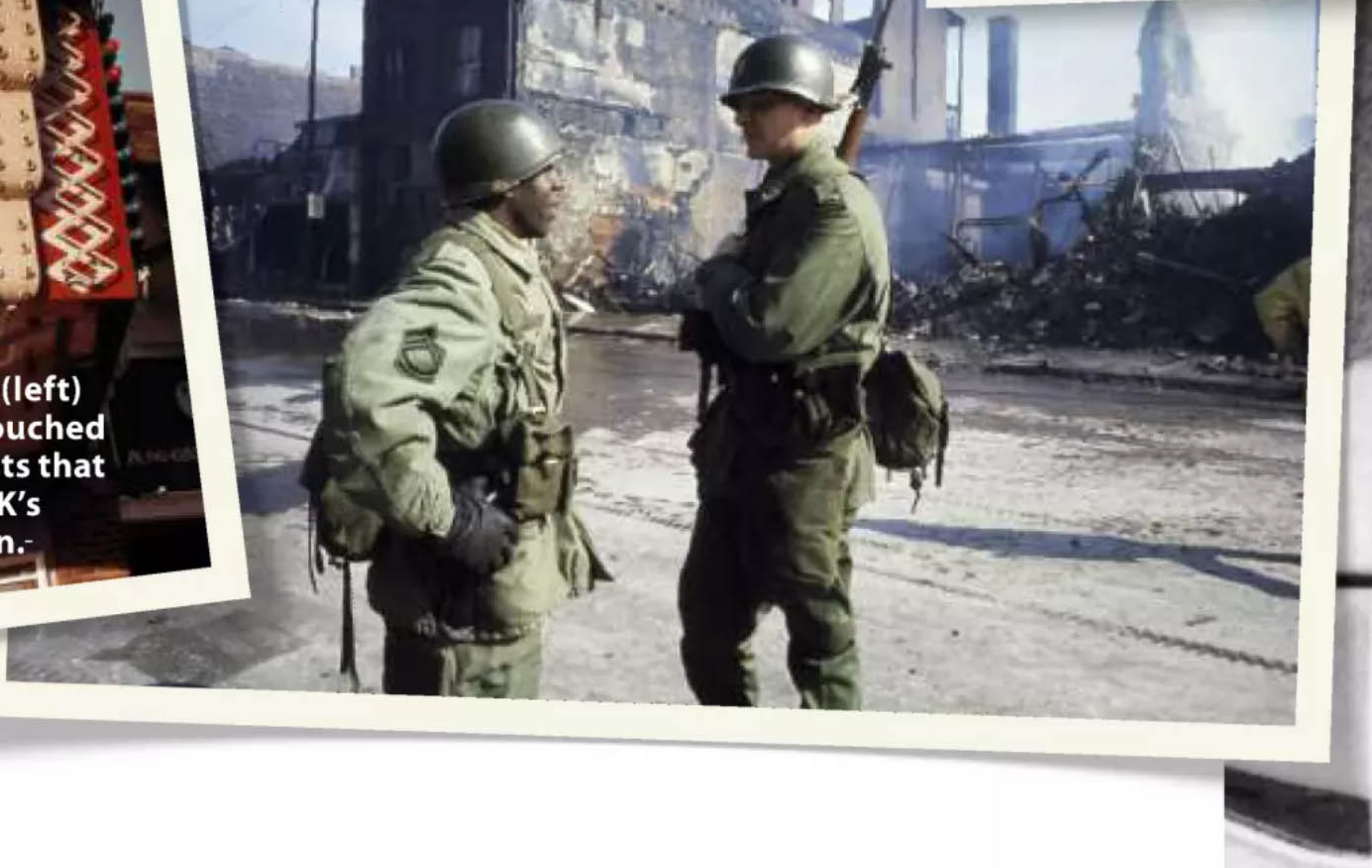
William Bell is featured in the Memphis music documentary Take Me To The River. More info at williambell.com



MARTIN LUTHER KING
ASSASSINÉ

HOMMAGE
AU PRESTIGIEUX COMBATTANT ANTIRACISTE
PRIX NOBEL DE LA PAIX
MARDI 9 AVRIL 1968, A 20 H. 30
AU CIRQUE D'HIVER

STAX
SOULSVILLE U.S.A.



Stax studios (left) was left untouched in the protests that followed MLK's assassination.

A shot rings out at 6.01pm in Memphis: Dr King lies fatally injured on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, as aides point to the apparent location of the assassin.

Getty (4), Alamy

The Strangeloves

Three farmer's boys from the Australian outback – or so they led the world to believe – created one of the legendary *Nuggets* compilation's oddest tracks. Only the truth was even stranger than the fiction… By Mark Paytress.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL *NUGGETS* COMBO consisted of four bowl-haired hopefuls in a suburban garage banging out Louie Louie or I'm A Man. The Strangeloves, whose lowbrow classic Night Time hit the US Top 30 in February 1966, didn't fit that mould on any level.

To anyone recalling the group's emergence a year earlier, The Strangeloves were supposedly three farmer's boys from the Australian outback – Miles, Niles and Giles Strange – looking uncomfortable in zebra-patterned waistcoats, leather trousers and Beatles wigs. One sported an incongruous beatnik beard. The story went that, having crossbred a lucrative new breed of sheep, they'd flown into the States, possibly via Africa, to live the pop dream.

Posing with spears and drums that were either Aborigine or purchased from the Maasai, The Strangeloves kept up the act until their second single, I Want Candy, peaked at Number 11 in August 1965. To meet the demand for appearances, the original trio – all in their mid-twenties – miraculously metamorphosed into a more teen-friendly four-piece.

This, more or less, was The Strangeloves that played on the records, including the next 45, Night Time: bassist-vocalist John Shine, guitarist Jack Raczka, drummer Tom Kobus and sax-playing vocalist Richie Lauro. Session players to a man, all have since passed into obscurity.

The inclusion of Night Time on *Nuggets* rightly places the song alongside The Standells' Dirty Water and Shadows Of Knight's Oh Yeah as among the Class of '65's most dynamic moments of new sonic mindlessness. The beat is pure dum-dum aggression, a heavily accented troglodyte thud on one chord that sporadically stutters into verse-separating syncopation. Message-wise, it's all attitude, too: turn up the radio, turn on the passion and hit the alienation button ("I jump in the shower/Wash the world off my back").

That wasn't all. The seven-note piano figure that sets Night Time in motion is more Blue Note than bum note. And the guitar lines – all tremolo and reverb – that tingle and glide across the numbskull pulse lend the song a soft, acid strangeness. A deft hand of craftsmanship was surely at work.

BANG RECORDS
W-10049
Time: 2:29
Publisher Grand Canyon Music, Inc.
A Feldman, Goldstein, Gottehrer Production
Arranged and Conducted by Bassett Hand
NIGHT TIME
(Feldman, Goldstein, Gottehrer)
THE STRANGELOVES
B-514

Indeed, far from being farmer's boys, The Strangeloves turned out to be three Brill Building-style writer/producer types from New York. Collectively known as FGG Productions, Bob Feldman, Jerry Goldstein and Richard Gottehrer released enough pop records between 1963 and '66 to fill a jukebox. Having cut their teeth supplying material for Dion, Freddy Cannon and Bobby Vee, their big break came in 1963 when protégés The Angels hit Number 1 with My Boyfriend's Back. Inspired by the British Invasion, they formed a male vocal group early in '65, taking their name from Stanley Kubrick's latest film, Dr Strangelove. Key inspiration and tour partners The Dave Clark Five heard The Strangeloves' live version of Hang On Sloopy and planned to record it themselves, but FGG discoveries The McCoys beat them to it – giving the team its most enduring hit.

"Behind the garage attitude, a deft hand was surely at work."

LABEL
BANG

RELEASED
1965

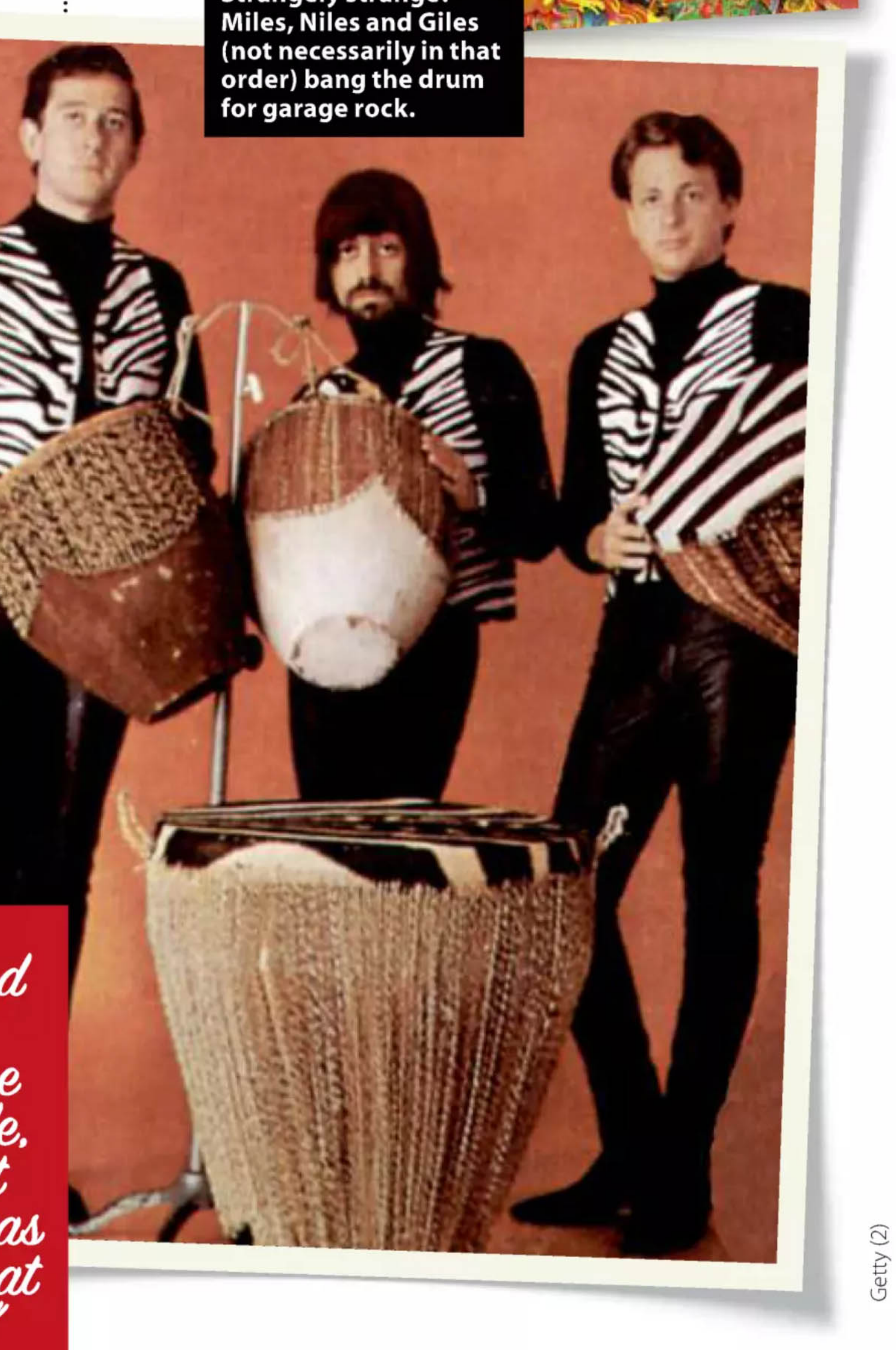
CHART PEAK
#30 US

COMPOSERS
Bob Feldman, Jerry Goldstein, Richard Gottehrer

PRODUCERS
FGG

The re-emergence in 1972 of Night Time as a *Nuggets* classic would have been at least as satisfying. By then, they were industry heavyweights in the US, Goldstein steering the careers of War and Sly & The Family Stone, Gottehrer co-founding the Sire label, with production jobs for Blondie and Richard Hell up ahead. Not a bad end for three farmer's boys from the Aussie outback…

Nuggets
Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era
1965-1968



Strangely strange: Miles, Niles and Giles (not necessarily in that order) bang the drum for garage rock.

Getty (2)

Sunny Afternoon

In March 1966, The Kinks' Ray Davies was suffering acute nervous exhaustion following a disastrous US tour. Then, after two months of writer's block spent listening to Frank Sinatra, a "life-affirming" jewel emerged in a new musical style.

"When I started writing the script to [the musical] Sunny Afternoon, the source of inspiration was the front room where I grew up. It was the room I was born in, where my sisters had their parties, where The Kinks had their first rehearsals. It was also the place where on Midsummer's Day 1957 my sister Rene bought me my first guitar for my 13th birthday, and died that night.

In the show, the song comes across as joyous affirmation of life because it got to Number 1 the year England won the World Cup [1966]. Sunny Afternoon is pivotal to the memory of that. But shortly before writing it, I'd had, if not a nervous breakdown, then serious work overload. I was walking into walls through exhaustion. I couldn't see life beyond tomorrow let alone beyond The Kinks.

The Kinks were in a bad way. We'd started as friends, but Mick had been fighting on stage with Dave, and Pete had lost the faith. We were embroiled in lawsuits and we couldn't get our song royalties. And we'd been banned from America. I wanted to give up touring. The Kinks toured Belgium and France in March 1966 without me, while I stayed at home and did nothing.

I wanted to get away from the hard-edged rock sound that we'd been making. All I could listen to was old-time music, Frank Sinatra records, songs from my parents' era. I hadn't written anything in two months. I was going through a writer's crisis – and I had to come up with a hit. Writing Sunny Afternoon got me through all that.

I'd bought a little upright piano. I'd always written on piano, so that wasn't a change. But that chromatic descending D minor [intro] chord was. It was like therapy, like learning scales all over again. Everything had collided at once and out of it came this uplifting, life-affirming song. Its predecessor, Dedicated Follower Of Fashion, had been social comment. Sunny Afternoon came out of *me*.

I'd turned the song's character into a metaphor for my own predicament. I imagined this broken-down aristocrat on his uppers spending his last money on champagne. The lyric is a cover for a dire situation. That line, 'Save me from this squeeze/Help me sail away', is a genuine cry for help. And it's done on a key change, from minor to major, which gives it the happy mood. The good-time element was also a celebration of ragtime music. My father was a music-hall fan who also loved traditional jazz.

Though I don't like to write about politics, it was a political song. The 'big fat mama' was the government, the establishment. The Labour government was devaluing the pound. And I felt it was the beginning of the end of that Swinging London glory moment when the upper class wore the same flowery shirts as everyone else on the Kings Road. I saw a double-edge to all that 'We're in it all together' and I was not happy with it. But at the same time I was celebrating what was a wonderful time. Without the Swinging '60s I don't think I would have had a career. But it was also a time of reckoning, of facing up to realities. You can hear that on the follow-up, Dead End Street, which was a protest about housing, and not being able to afford to live.

The first time the band heard the song was in the studio on the Thursday [May 12, 1966]. We'd normally rehearse a song before going in to record it, but this time we didn't. [Pianist] Nicky Hopkins, a brilliant musician, was at the session and he was playing all these embellishments. I said, 'Can you just thump it out the way I play it?' When we recorded it next morning, he copied my minimalist playing and that helped get the sound I was after. [Producer] Shel Talmy's strength was his ability to do nothing. That's not an insult. The best producers sometimes stand back and let the artists do what they wanna do. At the last minute, Nicky overdubbed a melodica to give the song a merry-go-round quality.

There was a cutting-room next to Pye's Studio 2, so as soon as we'd finished, I got it cut and went straight up to the sixth floor to see the head of the company, Louis Benjamin. I said, 'We've got to get this record out in the summer because England are going to win the World Cup.' I'd gone from being weakened by exhaustion to someone who had an almost manic self-belief.

Sunny Afternoon's success didn't mean much at the time. Derek Taylor wrote a piece saying that the song was so revolutionary and British that if The Kinks could tour America they'd be the biggest thing there. That was frustrating, having this new level of musical confidence and success, and not being able to go there.

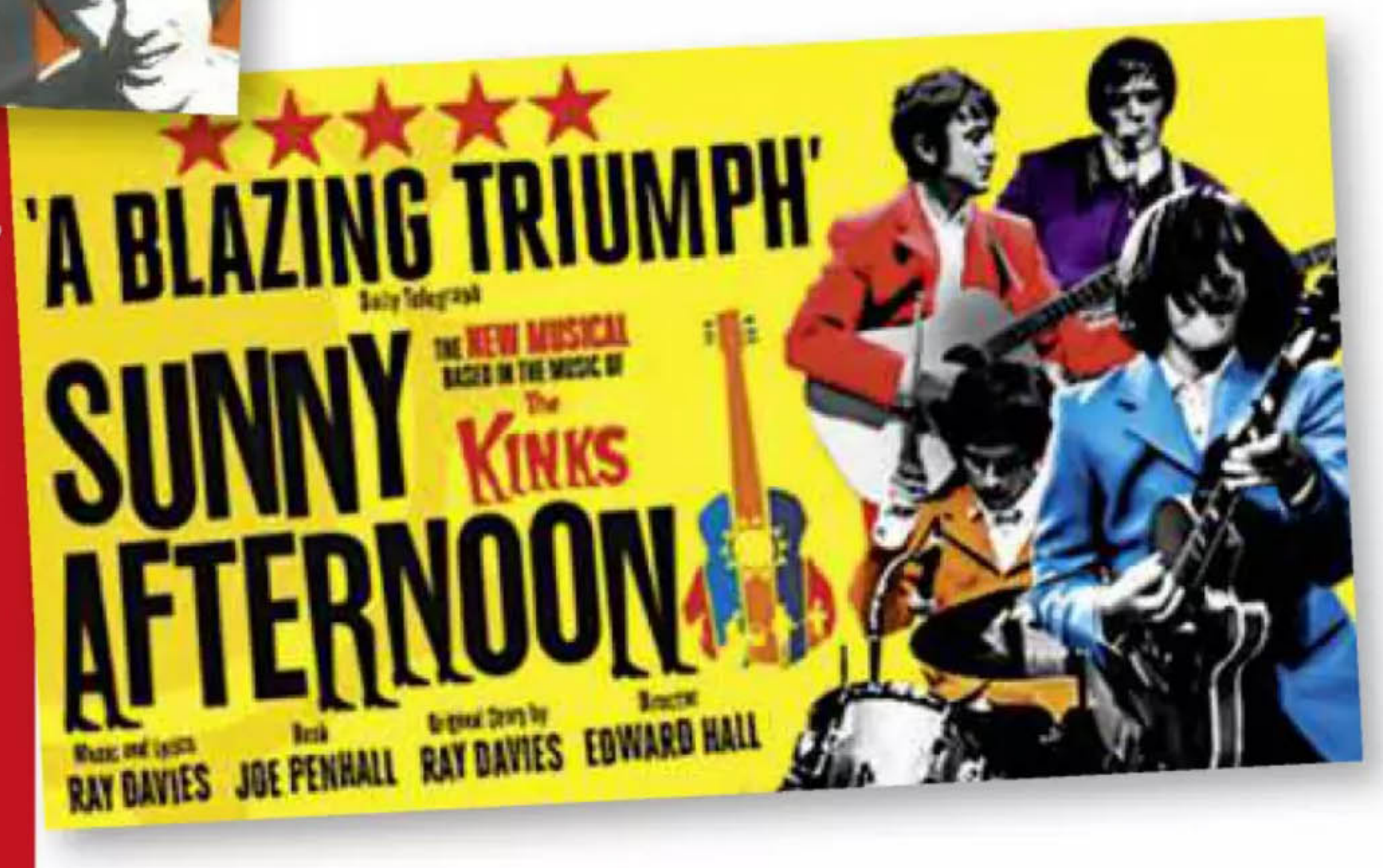
All I've got's this sunny afternoon? Well, the artist Turner's last words were 'The sun is God.' I was born on Midsummer's Day. That probably had an effect on me. And when my sister died on my 13th birthday it was sunny afternoon."

As told to Mark Paytress

LABEL
PYE
RELEASED
1966
CHART PEAK
UK 1
COMPOSER
RAY DAVIES
PRODUCER
SHEL TALMY
RECORDED
PYE STUDIOS

KINKS
SUNNY AFTERNOON
I'M NOT LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE
PYE

"The song's lyrics are a genuine cry for help."


★★★★★
'A BLAZING TRIUMPH'
Daily Telegraph
SUNNY AFTERNOON
THE NEW MUSICAL BASED ON THE MUSIC OF The KINKS
Music and lyrics RAY DAVIES
Book JOE PENHALL
Original Story by RAY DAVIES
Director EDWARD HALL

Getty

dwig
he
KINK

Ray of sunshine: The Kinks in 1966 (from left) Dave Davies, Pete Quaife, Ray Davies and Mick Avory.

Real Pop music: Iggy leads The Stooges' assault of "no time to think, just bash it out".

My Sounds Of The '60s

Gaz Coombes

For the former Supergrass frontman, back this year with his emoto-psych solo triumph *Matador*, the '60s were the sonic and psychic motherlode. Here he talks us through his ten favourite albums of the era.

OS MUTANTES

Os Mutantes *(Polydor, 1968)*

I discovered this album about 10 years ago and I was immediately struck by how wild and crazy it sounded. It's their debut album and there's this really insane fuzz guitar mayhem going on and then there are these psychedelic and avant garde flourishes mixed with bossa nova, samba and tropicalia. You've got bits of Jimi Hendrix in there, they cover The Mamas And The Papas' Once Was A Time I Thought and Françoise Hardy's Le Premier Bonheur Du Jour, they're feeding on the Western scenes of the time.

THE SONICS

Here Are The Sonics *(Etiquette, 1965)*

It's so full-on and crazy, the attitude, the danger, the reckless feel to it, it's so intense. You hear it in the way they tackle the covers, Have Love Will Travel is just amazing, just this noise, you've got Do You Love Me, Money, Night Time Is The Right Time, then their own songs, The Witch, Psycho, Strychnine, they're just mental.

THE STOOGES

The Stooges *(Elektra, 1969)*

John Cale produces this and you just wonder what the studio vibe was like when they were recording it. I expect it was very un-studio like, just, "Let's get in the room and power through it, no stopping, no time to think, just bash it out." That grit and energy was a direct influence on Supergrass. When I wrote Richard III in my little bedsit on a four-track tape recorder, I knew I wanted to start with a killer bass line, which was directly from them.

SCOTT WALKER

Scott 4 *(Philips, 1969)*

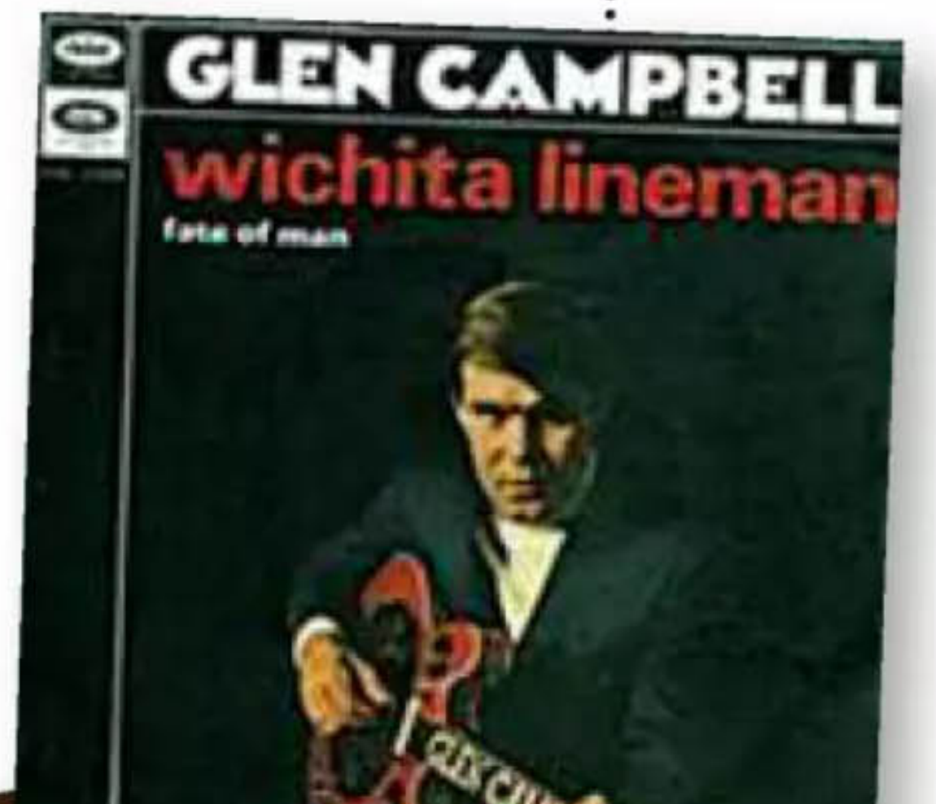
It's mad that, at that time, you'd go into a studio to record an album and you'd be recording with a live orchestra, you'd have all these beautiful arrangements and production by Johnny Franz. The bass sound on this record really struck me, it was a case of, that's my bass sound. As a songwriter and lyricist, Scott has this darkness and depth, the commercial poppyness and teen innocence of the Walker Brothers has gone. It's really weird but beautifully poetic as well.

GLEN CAMPBELL

Wichita Lineman *(Capitol, 1968)*

This album was a part of Supergrass' touring life, we played it on the bus all the time. It's the warmth of it. As a musician you strive to sound like that, even the vocal sound is so natural and laid back and effortless and it's beautiful writing, not too sentimental, not too ingrained in the country genre. You've got Carol Kaye on bass, Hal Blaine on drums, Jimmy Webb plays organ on the track Wichita Lineman, so the room is full of musicians all at the top of their game.

Cooking with Gaz: "The warmth of Wichita Lineman – as a musician, you strive to sound like that."



Os Mutantes

> "Jim, Bowie, Janis... it's like they came to earth to show us how it's done."

THE DOORS

Strange Days *(Elektra, 1967)*

The Doors were one of the first '60s bands I got into, when I was 13 and in my first band. What got me was the space they gave each other, the rawness, and the writing. You've got Love Me Two Times, Moonlight Drive. Then there's Jim… I think of him as an alien, like Elvis, Bowie, Janis. It's like they came down to earth to show us how it's done. Jim had this sixth-form poetry side of himself but it didn't matter because when he nailed it, it really worked.

FRANK ZAPPA

Hot Rats *(Reprise, 1969)*

He presents a little stylish window to us, he's taking bits of jazz, bits of classical, but he's presenting them with a rawness. It's never indulgent, never pretentious. He uses this incredible musical intelligence but it's effortless, organic. There's extensive soloing but it's the way he doubles up the piano and violin and guitar and violin that's really influential, you hear it on Jack White's last record [2014's *Lazaretto*]. This was a big influence on Supergrass when we were just starting out.

FRED NEIL

Fred Neil *(Capitol, 1966)*

Like most people, I heard Harry Nilsson's version of Everybody's Talkin' in the Midnight Cowboy film. Fred Neil's way of guitar playing influenced my demo songwriting and recording. This album sounds so sad and beautiful, it's just like a big warm hug.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART

Safe As Milk *(Buddah, 1967)*

Ever since I first heard this, I've been interested in the way Beefheart writes, his playing, his production. Sure 'Nuff 'N Yes I Do is one of my absolute favourite tracks and I often open my DJing set with it, it just has this incredible energy. Then throughout the album there are these little rock moments that I've only heard since in grunge and Queens Of The Stone Age. He was obviously very musically intelligent but he wrote as a maverick, a real mentalist.

THE ZOMBIES

Odessey And Oracle *(CBS, 1968)*

Supergrass were on tour with the Foo Fighters in 2006 and after the first show Taylor [Hawkins, drummer] came bursting into our dressing room shouting, "Guys, guys, you've got to hear *Odessey And Oracle*, fuck man!" and I got really into the album again. We played it the whole tour and had animated discussions about it, the playing, arrangements, singing, lyrics. It's so American in its psychedelia but delivered in an English voice.

As told to Lois Wilson

Alamy, Mick Hutson

Out of this world: Jazzers Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll embrace the alien world of psychedelia, '68.

One-Hit Wonder

This Wheel's On Fire

Jazz organ magus Brian Auger recalls how Trinity bandmate Julie Driscoll's "mysterious" voice turned a Dylan tune into eerie psychedelic magic. By Lois Wilson.

In the hands of Brian Auger, Julie Driscoll & The Trinity, Bob Dylan's This Wheel's On Fire got psychedelicised. Driscoll's bewitching vocal was pinned to Auger's Hammond organ swirls, distortion and phasing, and the resulting phantasmogoria landed the group their only UK hit, peaking at Number 5 in 1968.

The Trinity had formed from the ashes of Julie and Brian's previous group, Steampacket, an R&B Revue which also featured Long John Baldry and Rod Stewart. "We recorded but didn't release anything at the time, but it helped me get together my ideas for The Trinity. I wanted a rhythm section like Tamla, with Bernard Purdie on drums and James Jamerson on bass, and over that I wanted to overlay jazz harmony. When Steampacket disintegrated, Julie said she wanted in with The Trinity, and that gave us a great voice and different material."

The line-up was completed by drummer Clive Thacker and Dave Ambrose on bass. Their debut album, 1967's *Open*, hit the Top 5 in France, while a cover of Aretha Franklin's Save Me went to Number 1 there. "We broke into every major jazz festival in Europe – Berlin, Zurich, Rome, Montreux. I found myself jamming with some of my favourite musicians. It was an amazing time."

That same year Auger was given a US import copy of Bob Dylan's *The Basement Tapes* by his manager and label owner Giorgio Gomelsky. Copies were being passed around the musicians in London and they, in turn, were clamouring to cover the songs contained within.

Auger really wanted to have a go at The Mighty Quinn but Manfred Mann got their hands on that one first. It was Julie who suggested they tackle This Wheel's On Fire, spying its potential.

With producer Giogio Gomelsky and engineer Eddie Offord (later famed for his progressive rock productions for Emerson, Lake And Palmer), the group went into London's Advision studios. Initially, Auger was stumped about how to tackle the song.

"It featured Bob backed by a walking upright bass line. How do you put rock'n'roll attitude into that?" he says. "Initially nothing seemed to work, but Eddie was full of ideas. He brought out this huge, foot-square box with a gigantic knob on the front, an early phaser, and he suggested using it on the organ. Then we spotted a Mellotron in the corner, added some strings and thought, This is pretty psychedelic. Julie put her vocal on it and it fell into place. She had that mysterious edge to her voice that really pointed out how strange the lyrics were and gave the song its atmosphere. We were all finished in four or five hours."

The record's success, though, couldn't prevent the group's demise and on their return from a tour of the US, which Auger calls "intense", the group went their separate ways. Julie went on to record with jazz group Centipede, marrying the leader, pianist and composer Keith Tippett and now sings under the name Julie Tippetts. She revisited This Wheel's On Fire in 1992 with actor/comedian Adrian Edmondson for the theme to BBC comedy Absolutely Fabulous.

Auger, meanwhile, started his own production company, and formed the Oblivion Express. "I started producing my own albums and pushed the boundaries of jazz and rock," he says. "I'm still playing today and loving every minute of it."

The Brian Auger Anthology is out now on Freestyle.

LABEL
MARMALADE

RELEASED
1968

CHART PEAK
UK 5

COMPOSER
BOB DYLAN

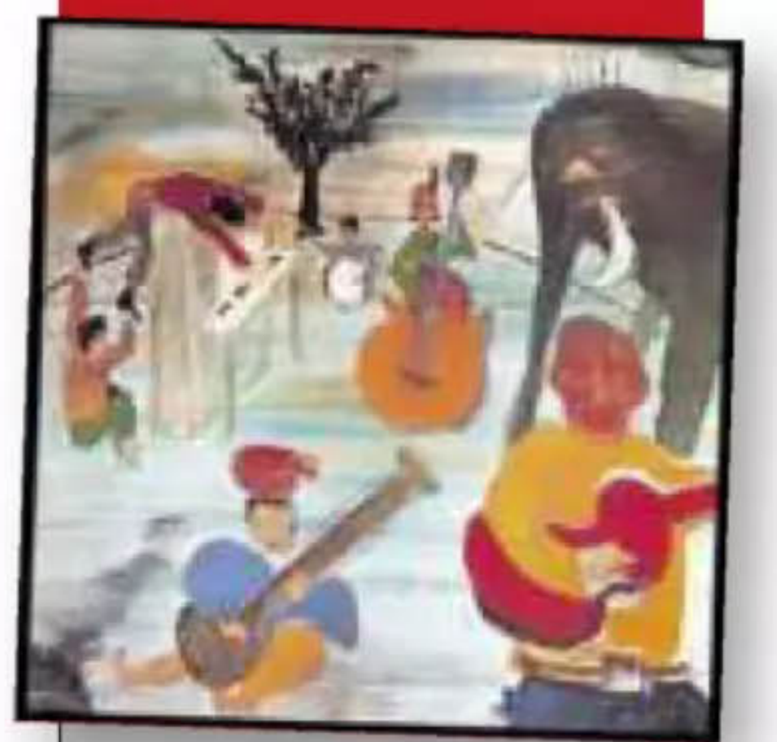
PRODUCER
G. GOMELSKY

RECORDED
ADVISION, LONDON

JULIE DRISCOLL
BRIAN AUGER
AND THE TRINITY
THIS WHEEL'S ON FIRE
BLACK CAT

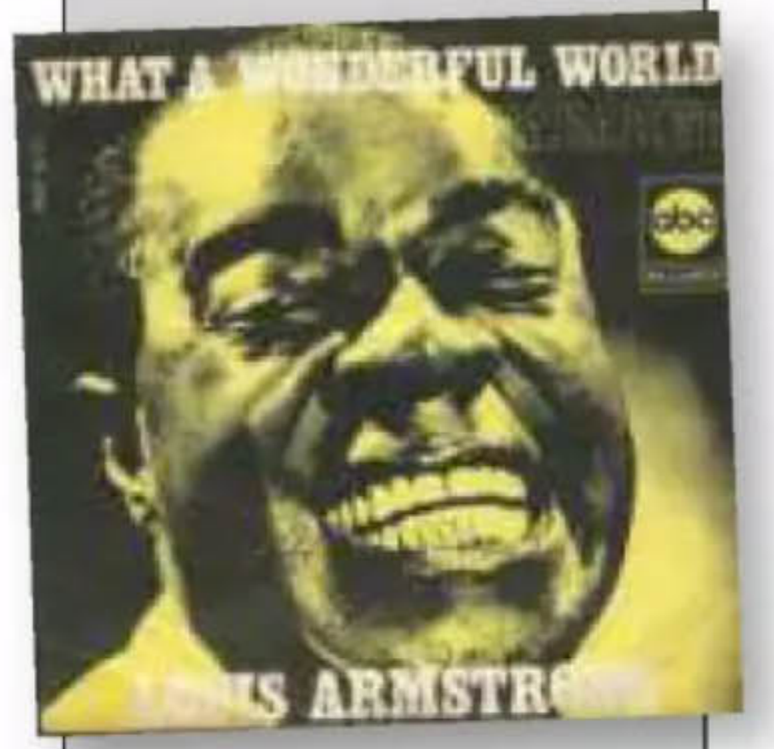
"The engineer brought out a box with a gigantic knob – an early phaser."

- Summer -
1968



COVERS

This Wheel's On Fire was first recorded on *The Basement Tapes* in 1967 and then appeared on The Band's *Music From Big Pink* in 1968. After it hit via Julie and Brian in '68, it was covered again a year later by The Byrds on their *Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde* album, but the next significant cover wasn't for another two decades. Siouxsie & The Banshees gave the tune a magnificent, pomp-and-strings treatment on their 1987 covers album *Through The Looking Glass.*



HITS

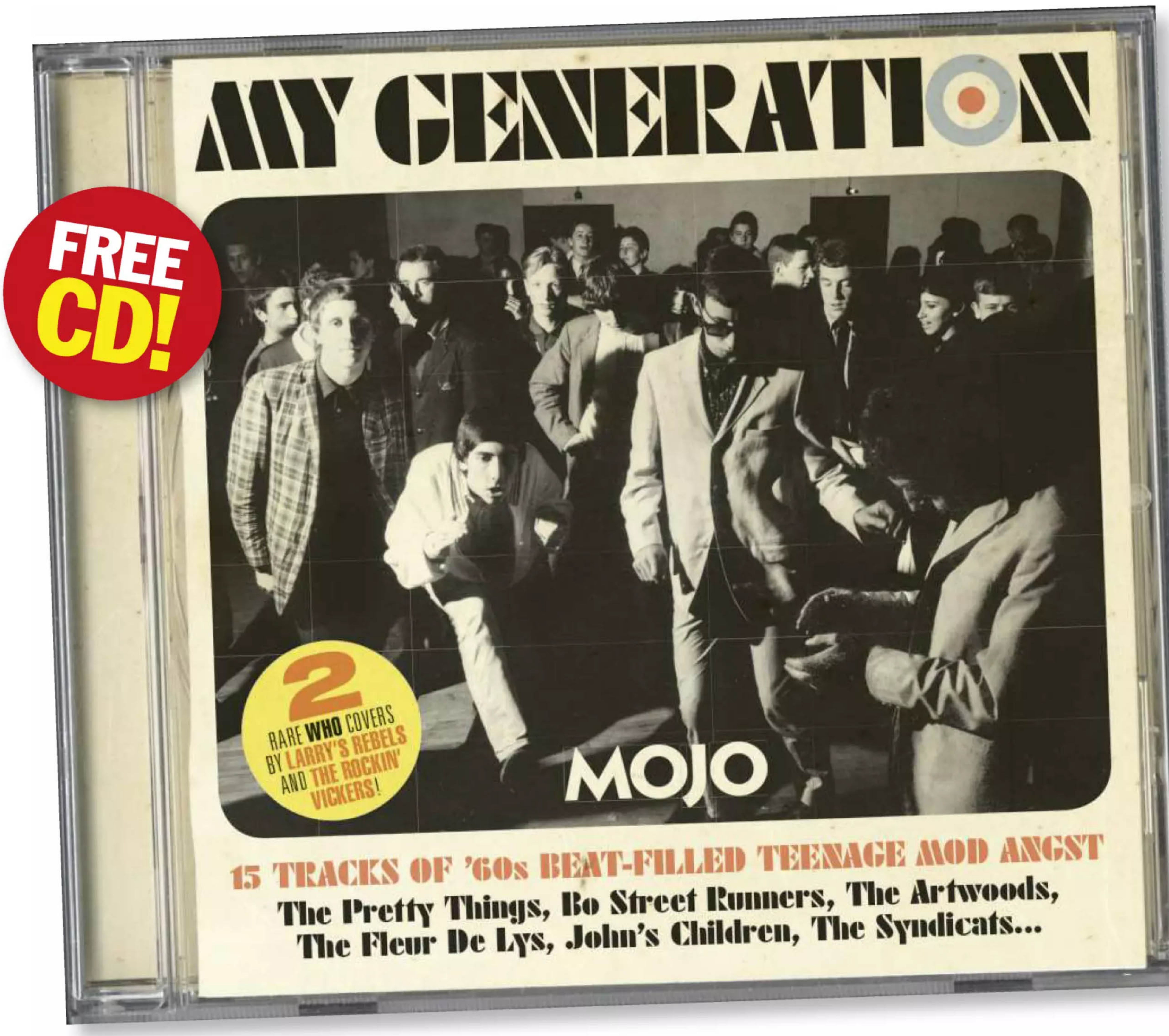
The bestselling single of 1968 was Louis Armstrong's deathless but decidedly un-groovesome What A Wonderful World; also hitting big that year were Des O'Connor's I Pretend, Cliff Richard's Congratulations, Andy Williams' Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Engelbert Humperdinck's A Man Without Love, Mary Hopkin's Those Were The Days and Leapy Lee's own one-hit-wonder Little Arrows.

ORGANS

Brian Auger has been recording music for five decades, making more than 30 albums with never a gap of more than five years between releases. Last year he was inducted into the Hammond Organ Hall Of Fame, along with Billy Preston, Jimmy Smith, Steve Winwood, Keith Emerson, Fats Waller, Booker T. Jones and Khalid Yasin, aka Larry Young of Larry Young's Fuel.

Getty

THE KIDS
AREN'T ALRIGHT!


FREE
CD!
MY GENERATION
2
RARE WHO COVERS
BY LARRY'S REBELS
AND THE ROCKIN' VICKERS!
MOJO
15 TRACKS OF '60s BEAT-FILLED TEENAGE MOD ANGST
The Pretty Things, Bo Street Runners, The Artwoods,
The Fleur De Lys, John's Children, The Syndicats...

THE WHO
THEIR 50 GREATEST TRACKS!
PLUS! PETE TOWNSHEND ON THE
PAINFUL ART OF SONGWRITING
VISIT MOJO4MUSIC.COM
MOJO
ON SALE
JUNE
30TH!

At home with The Beatles

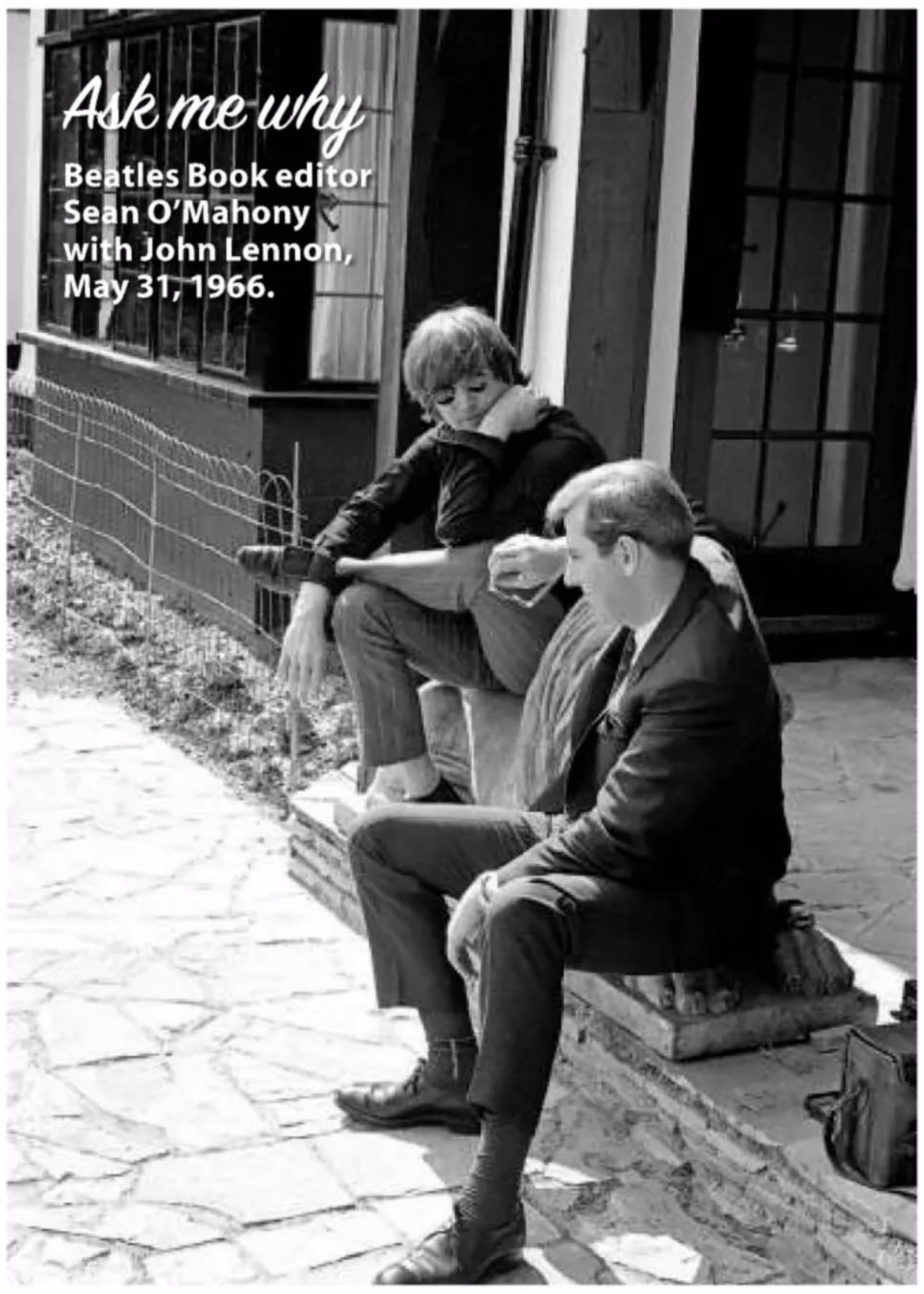
At the height of their fame in the '60s, what The Beatles treasured most was privacy. Yet in a series of extraordinary features for their fan magazine, the Fabs allowed the cameras into their homes. Here, 50 years on, rare and unseen shots from those sessions have been unearthed…

PHOTOS OF RINGO STARR CLIMBING TREES were a rarity in the mid '60s, and shots of The Beatles larking around in the privacy of their suburban London piles even scarcer. But in June 1966, readers of The Beatles Book, the band's monthly fan mag, were treated to a combination of both those extraordinary sights as part of an occasional series of 'at home' features published at the height of their fame.

The Beatles Book had first hit the shelves in August 1963, kicking off a run of 77 editions that would provide a remarkable window into the group's public and private worlds until December 1969, three months before their split.

The magazine – it was called a 'book' as a nod to the group's quirky humour – was the brainchild of Sean O'Mahony, who approached Beatles manager Brian Epstein in June 1963 about producing a group-endorsed fan mag. At the time, The Beatles' first Number 1, From Me To You, was still topping the charts; O'Mahony, meanwhile, was riding the success of Beat Monthly, a pioneering music glossy then into its fifth issue.

"I quickly realised that The Beatles needed their own magazine," he explains. "I was absolutely convinced they'd be as big as Elvis, right from the beginning. I thought everything about them was great: they were good-looking – though not all of them completely (laughs) – the music was fantastic, then there were the personalities… I told Brian Epstein I'd like to go along and interview them regularly and we did a deal – he was very easy and straightforward about it."



Ask me why

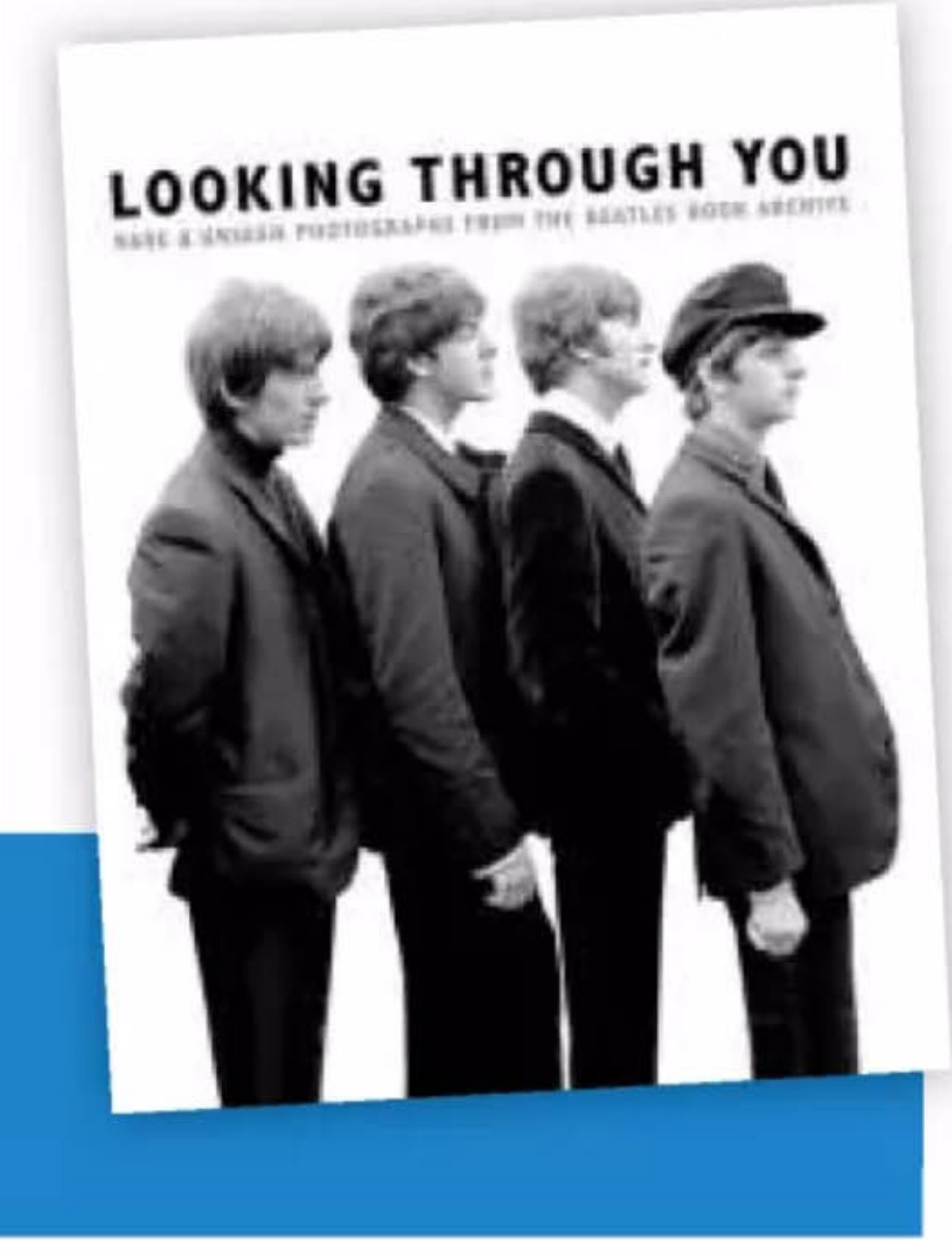
Beatles Book editor Sean O'Mahony with John Lennon, May 31, 1966.

On July 1, O'Mahony met the group at Abbey Road studios, where they were recording She Loves You. He recalls them being "nice and polite, no difficulty at all, though John would come out with lovely one-liners. Even if they were just about to record something, they would always turn to the camera." The Beatles Book staff photographer was Leslie Bryce, who'd previously shot for Jazz News, and would spend the next few years shadowing the band at home and abroad, amassing an enormous archive of images.

The magazine – whose best photos are now collected in a new book, Looking Through You – was tailored for a teenage audience, offering "lots of pics, Beatle news, fan club, Beatles songs", and was edited by O'Mahony (writing as 'Johnny Dean') with a small team based in a one-room office on Edgware Road. Retailing at one shilling and sixpence, Issue 1 sold a healthy 80,000 copies but by the end of December 1963 the print run had risen to 330,000, with sales remaining at a peak throughout 1964. "That lift-off period was fast and dramatic," says O'Mahony. "In publishing it's very rare for that to happen. Then it went into a very extended decline."

The main 'Beatles at home' features, from which the bulk of these shots are taken, ran in November 1965 (George Harrison), June 1966 (Ringo Starr) and August 1967 (John Lennon), with Paul McCartney declining the offer to be photographed at his St John's Wood house. He is, however, pictured with the other Beatles at their shared flat in Green Street, Mayfair in October 1963, and with John Lennon at roadies Mal Evans and Neil Aspinall's pad at Montagu Mews West, Marble Arch, two years later. There are also pictures of George and Ringo showing off their new cars.

So, 50 years on, enjoy this rare glimpse into The Beatles at home. ➢



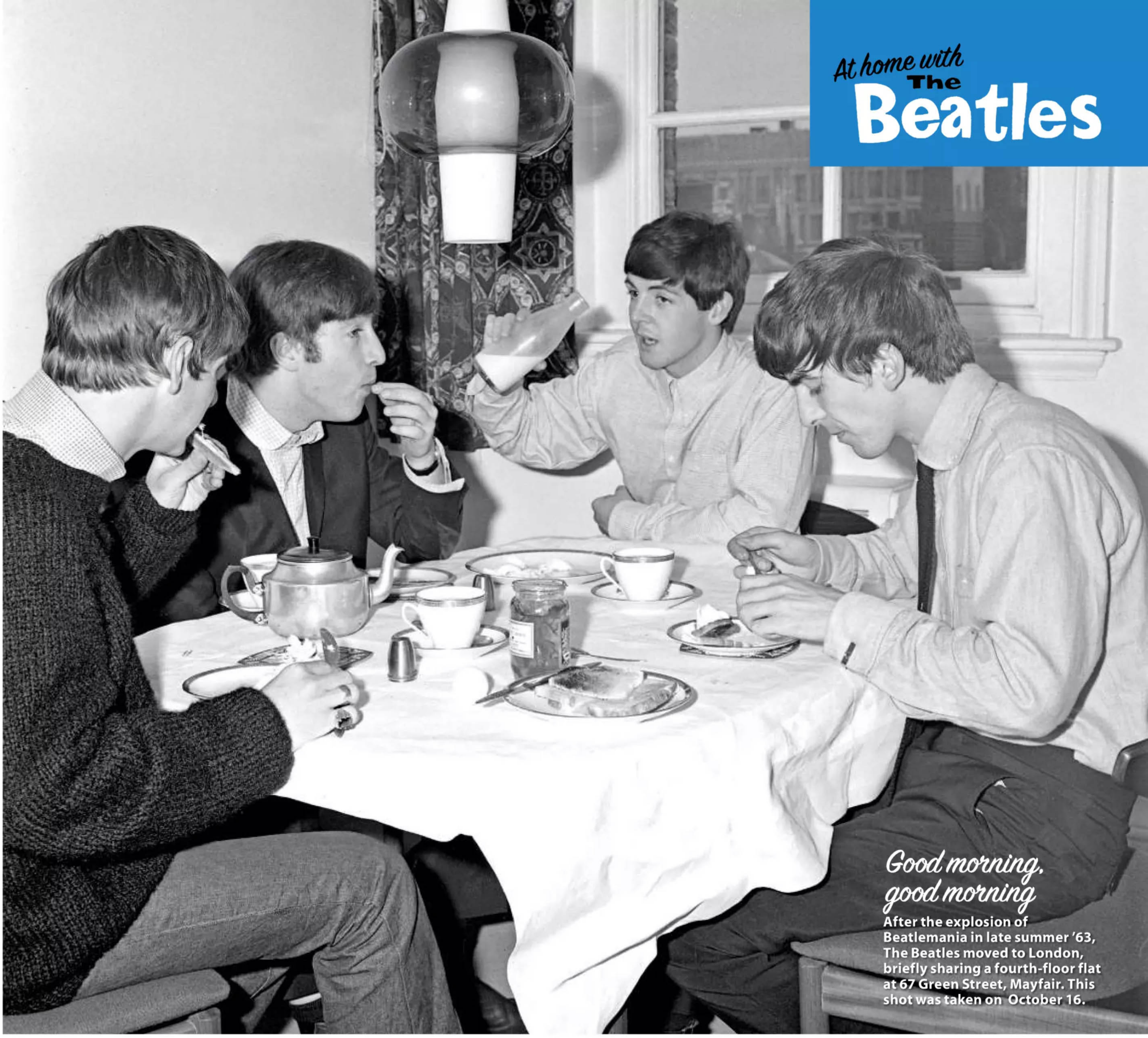
Looking Through You: **Rare & Unseen Photographs from The Beatles Monthly Archive is published by Omnibus Press, cased edition with replica of Beatles Fan Club 1964 Calendar, £39.95.**

In my tree

Ringo Starr climbs up to the tree house in the garden of Sunny Heights, his mock-Tudor home in Weybridge, May 31, 1966. Lennon, who lived nearby, paid a surprise visit on the day of the session (see picture opposite).

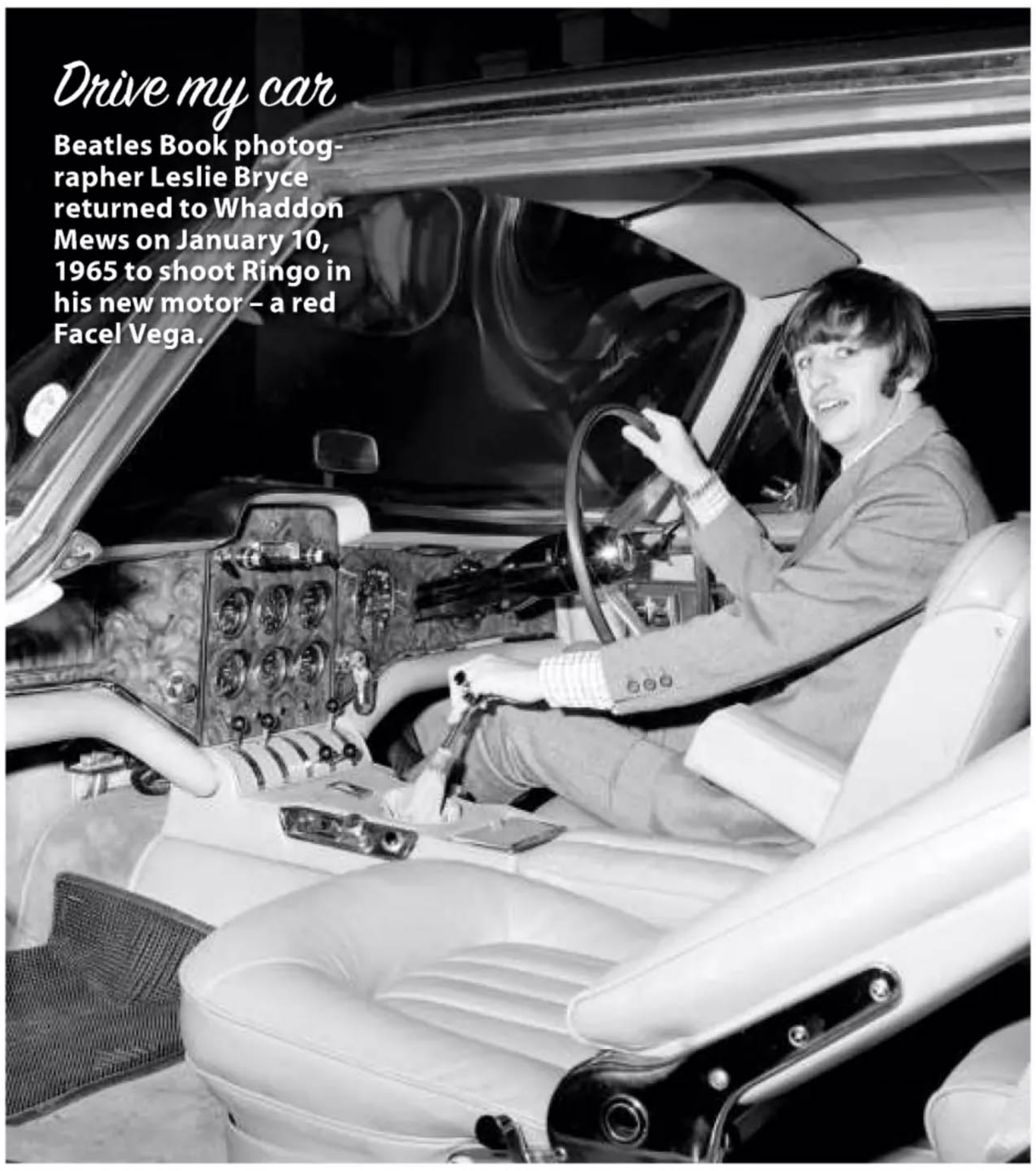
He loves you

George Harrison with his new grey E-type Jaguar, complete with portable record player, photographed in Whaddon Mews, Knightsbridge, July 11, 1964.



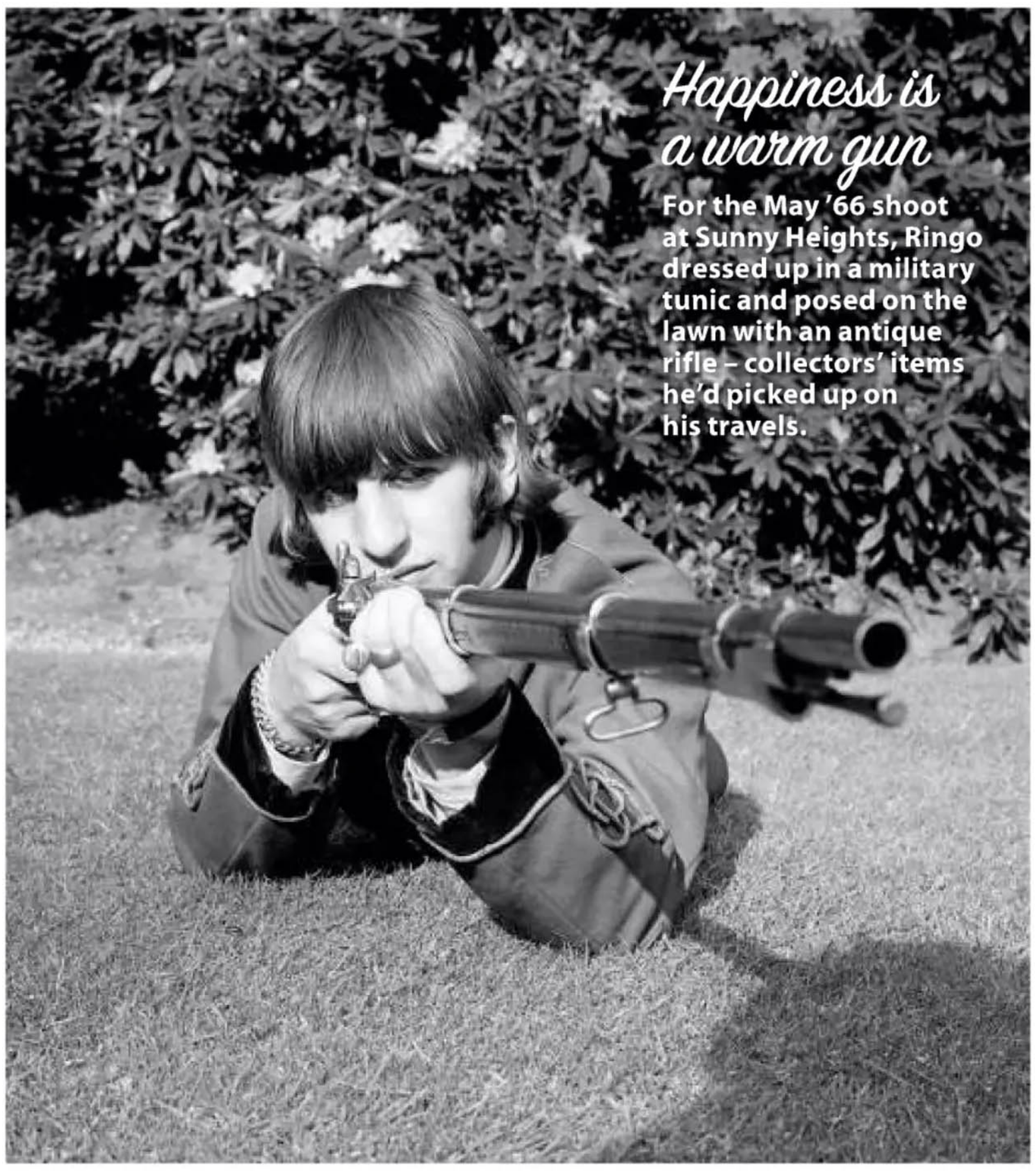
Good morning, good morning

After the explosion of Beatlemania in late summer '63, The Beatles moved to London, briefly sharing a fourth-floor flat at 67 Green Street, Mayfair. This shot was taken on October 16.



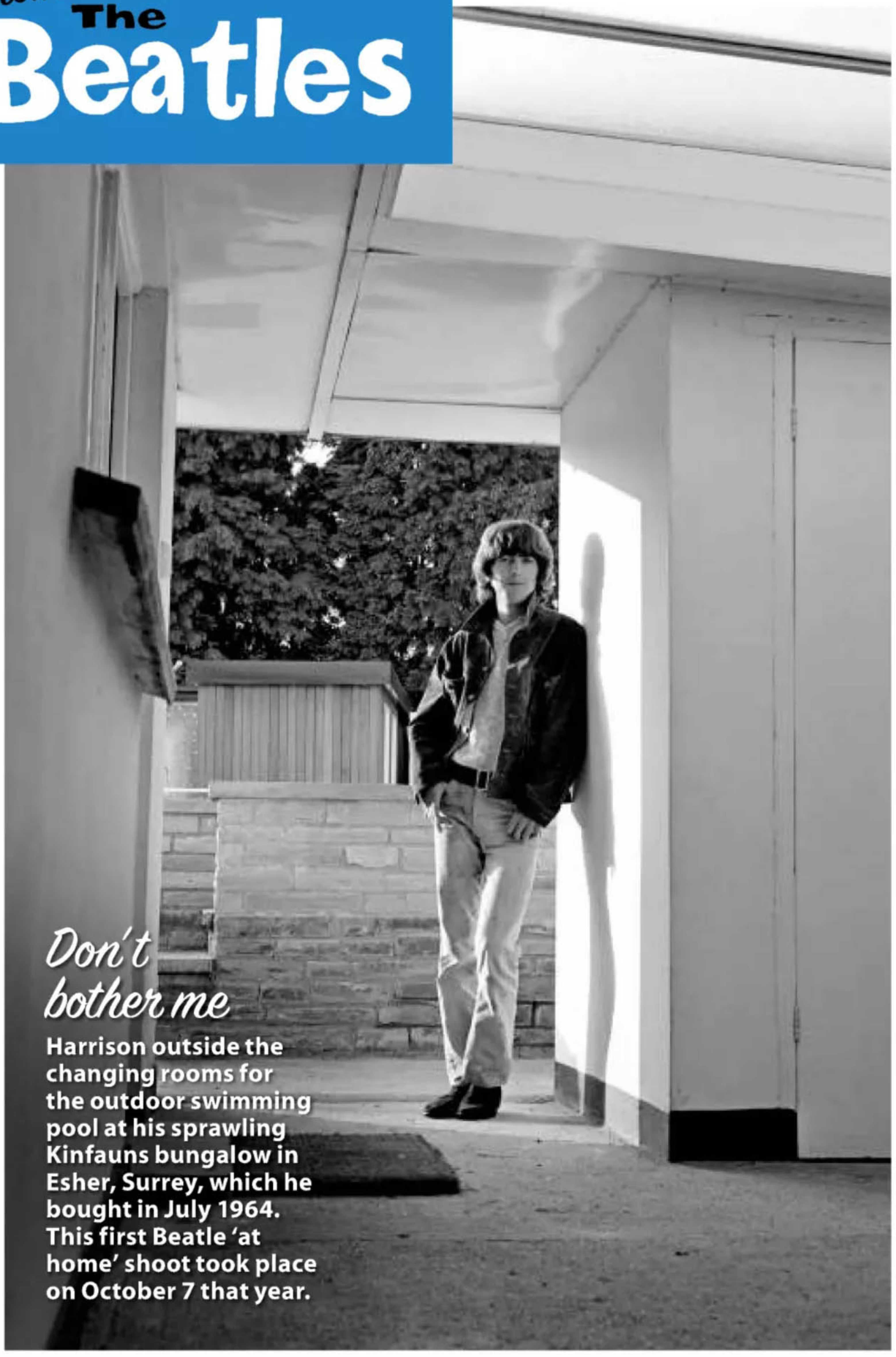
Drive my car

Beatles Book photographer Leslie Bryce returned to Whaddon Mews on January 10, 1965 to shoot Ringo in his new motor – a red Facel Vega.



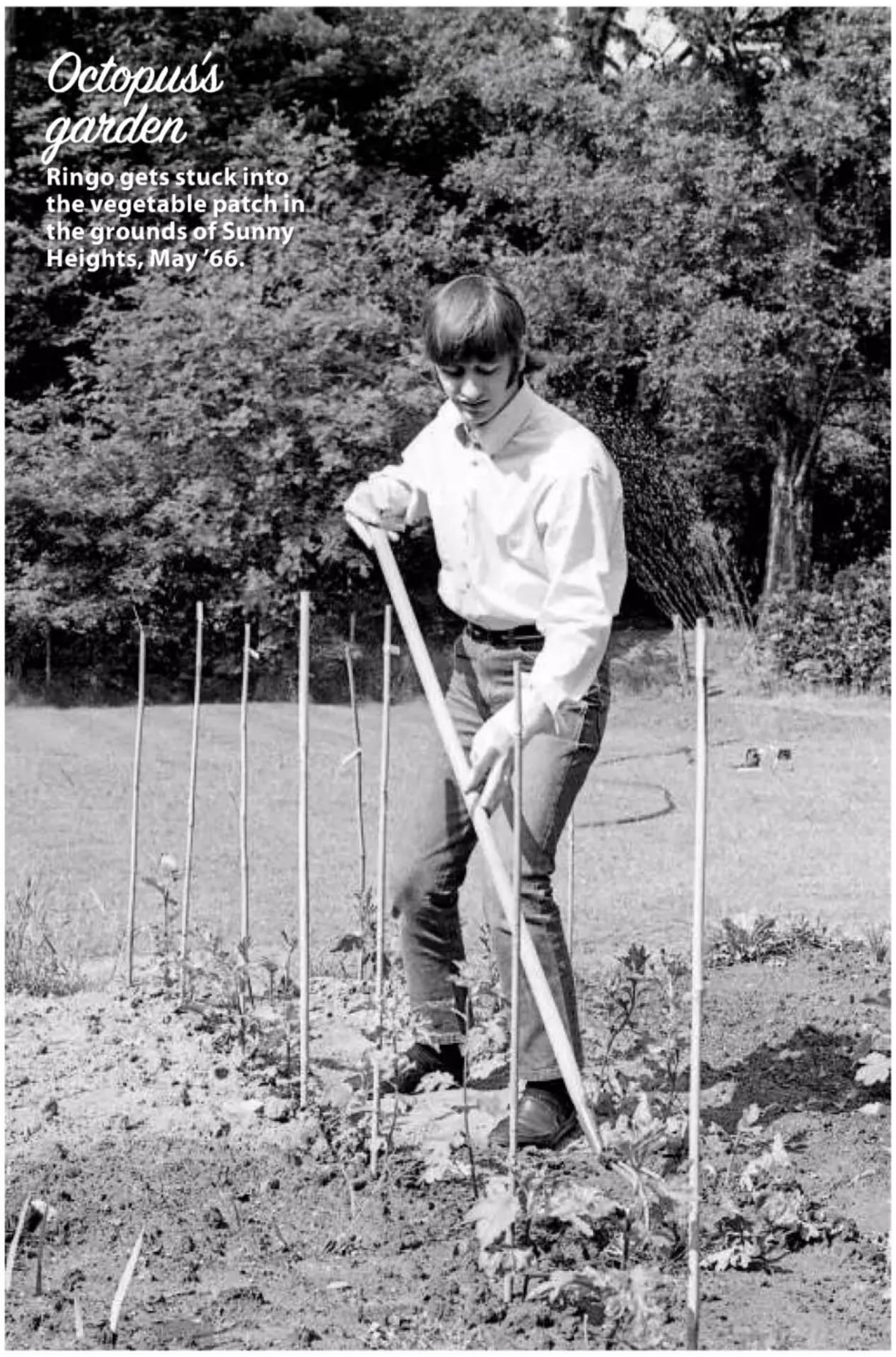
Happiness is a warm gun

For the May '66 shoot at Sunny Heights, Ringo dressed up in a military tunic and posed on the lawn with an antique rifle – collectors' items he'd picked up on his travels.



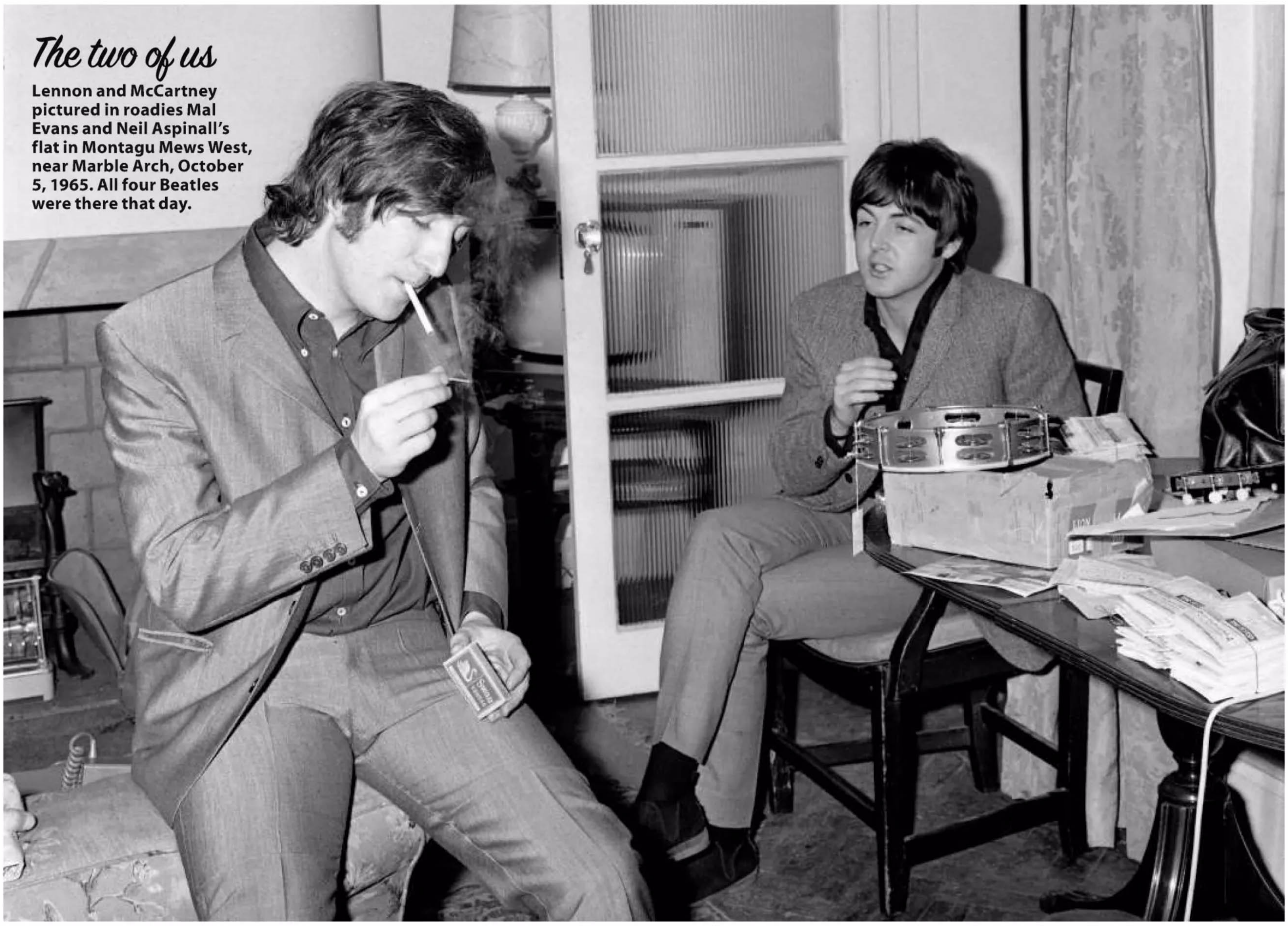
Don't bother me

Harrison outside the changing rooms for the outdoor swimming pool at his sprawling Kinfauns bungalow in Esher, Surrey, which he bought in July 1964. This first Beatle 'at home' shoot took place on October 7 that year.



Octopus's garden

Ringo gets stuck into the vegetable patch in the grounds of Sunny Heights, May '66.



The two of us

Lennon and McCartney pictured in roadies Mal Evans and Neil Aspinall's flat in Montagu Mews West, near Marble Arch, October 5, 1965. All four Beatles were there that day.

SAFE AS MILK
SAFE AS MILK
international times

I read the news today

John Lennon in his den at Kenwood, his mock-Tudor mansion in Weybridge, Surrey, on June 19, 1967. He's reading a copy of counterculture broadsheet International Times.

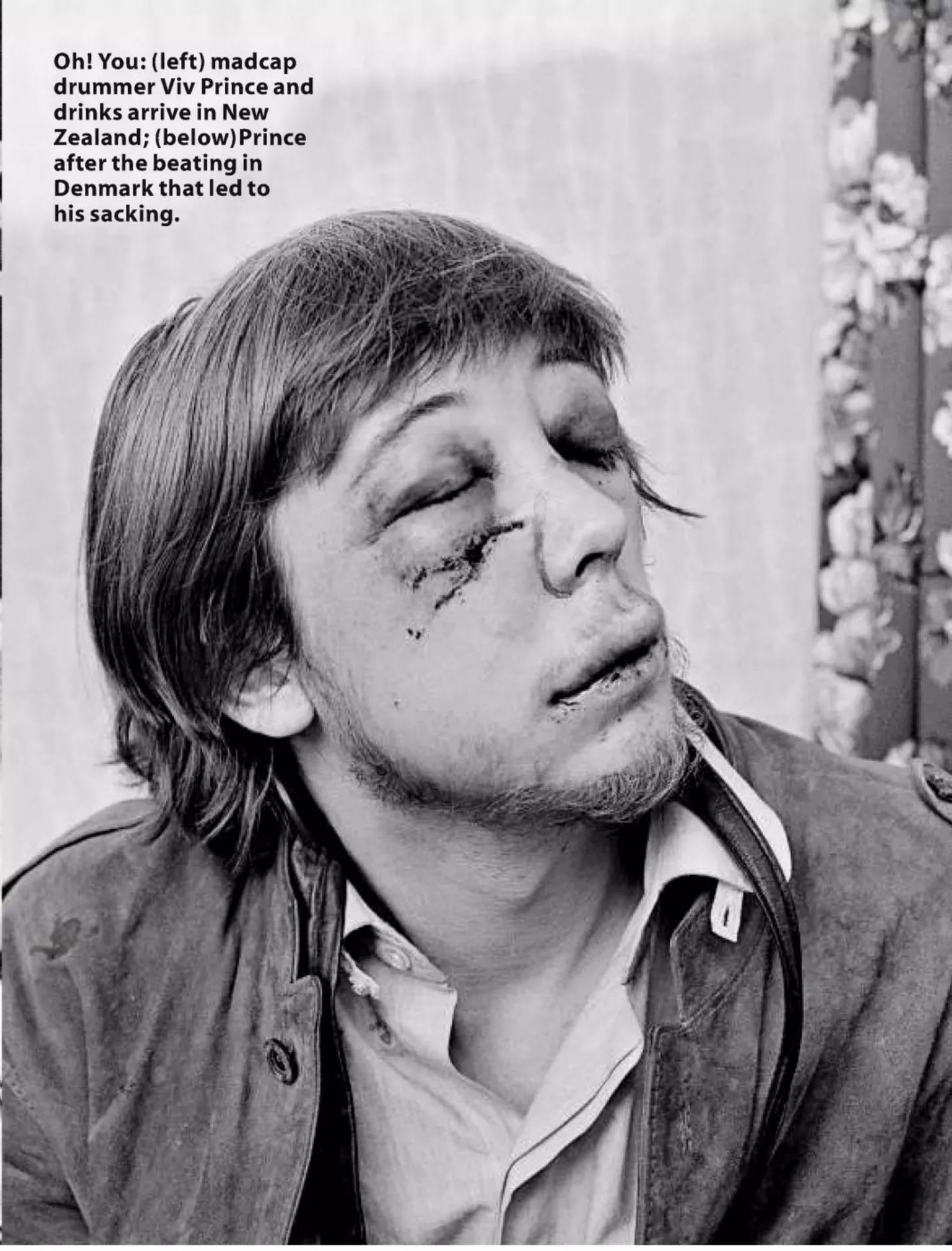
THERE'S A RI

Bent Rej,

OT GOIN' ON!

R&B DELINQUENTS AND PSYCHEDELIC EXPLORERS, **THE PRETTY THINGS'** BID FOR GREATNESS WAS HEXED BY LONG HAIR, RIOTS AND A BOOZE-ADDLED DRUMMER WITH A DEAD CRAYFISH.

WORDS: **MARK PAYTRESS**



Oh! You: (left) madcap drummer Viv Prince and drinks arrive in New Zealand; (below) Prince after the beating in Denmark that led to his sacking.

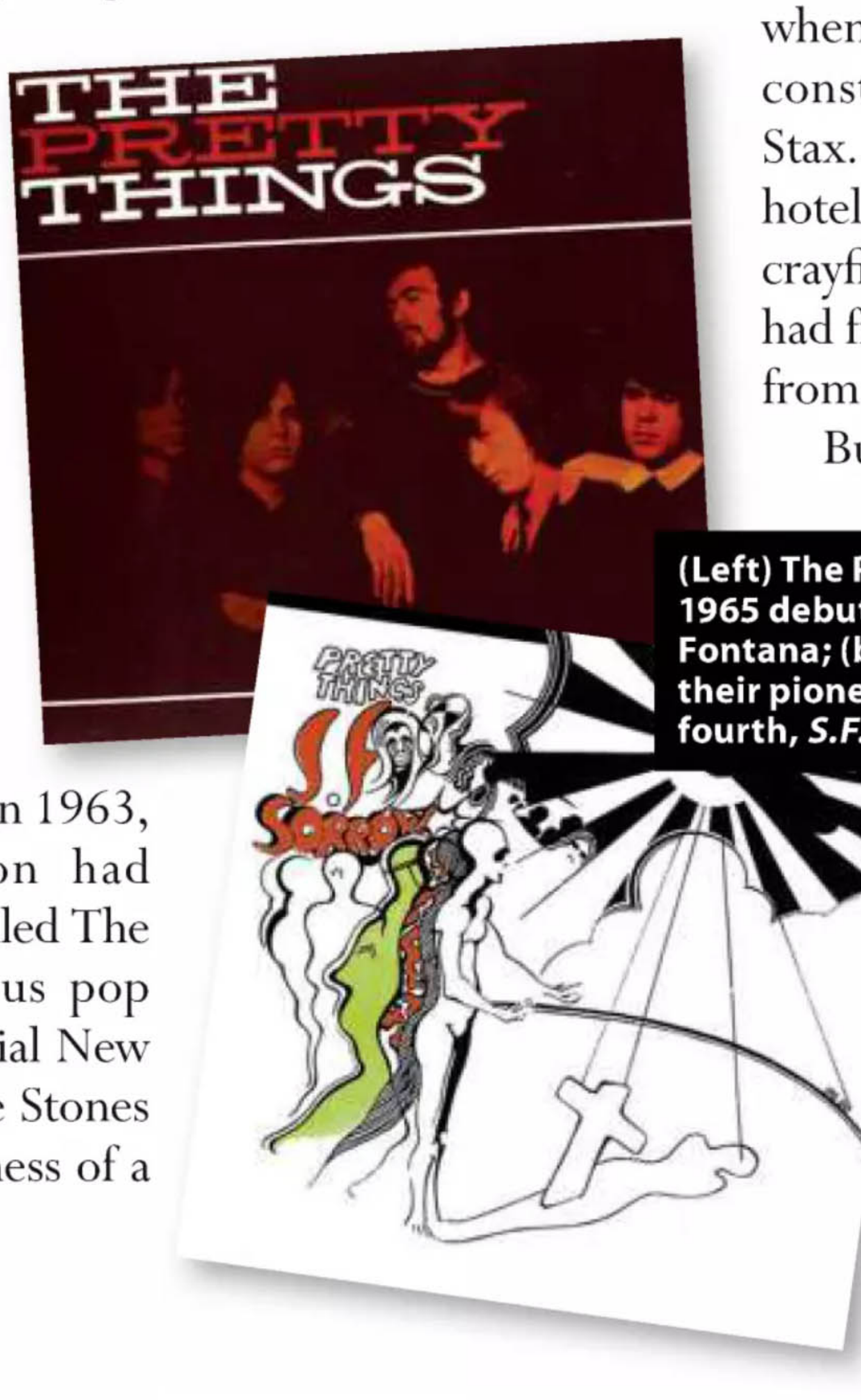
AUGUST 1965.HERMAN’S HERMITS’ I’M Henry VIII, I Am is the biggest-selling single in the USA after similar successes for Freddie And The Dreamers and Wayne Fontana And The Mindbenders. The British Invasion, supported by endless US package tours, gives no sign of abating. The Pretty Things, arguably the most convincing – and most thrilling – of the home-grown R&B combos, are nowhere to be seen. Instead, as their management holds out for “the right deal” to make that Atlantic crossing, London’s latest pop controversialists are 12,000 miles from home in New Zealand. And, not for the first time in their comically chequered career, matters are getting a little out of hand.

“Pretty Things’ Shock Exhibition” screamed one headline. “Frenzy!” “Stupid!” “Banned!” “Absolutely Disgusting!” and best of all, “‘Thing’ Nearly Missed Plane – Found In Wheelchair” were some of the other bold-type assessments of this most unpopular British invasion Down Under.

Yet the “dirty”, “hairy” Pretty Things were just doing their thing – cranking out tough, over-amped R&B with head-shaking abandon, to audiences that jumped out of their seats and screamed their approval. But in the eyes of the country’s moral guardians, this was less a display of pop music than – and we quote – “five delegates at a nihilists’ convention”.

The Pretty Things were no strangers to scandal. Since debuting at the Dartford Station Hotel in 1963, the R&B quintet from south-east London had endured bans, beatings and headlines as they rivalled The Rolling Stones as the nation’s most notorious pop deviants. But during two riotous weeks in colonial New Zealand – which had hosted The Beatles and the Stones with little fuss – they incited mayhem and madness of a kind not witnessed in rock’n’roll there before.

Bent Rej, Ross White



(Left) The Pretties’ 1965 debut on Fontana; (bottom) their pioneering fourth, *S.F. Sorrow*.

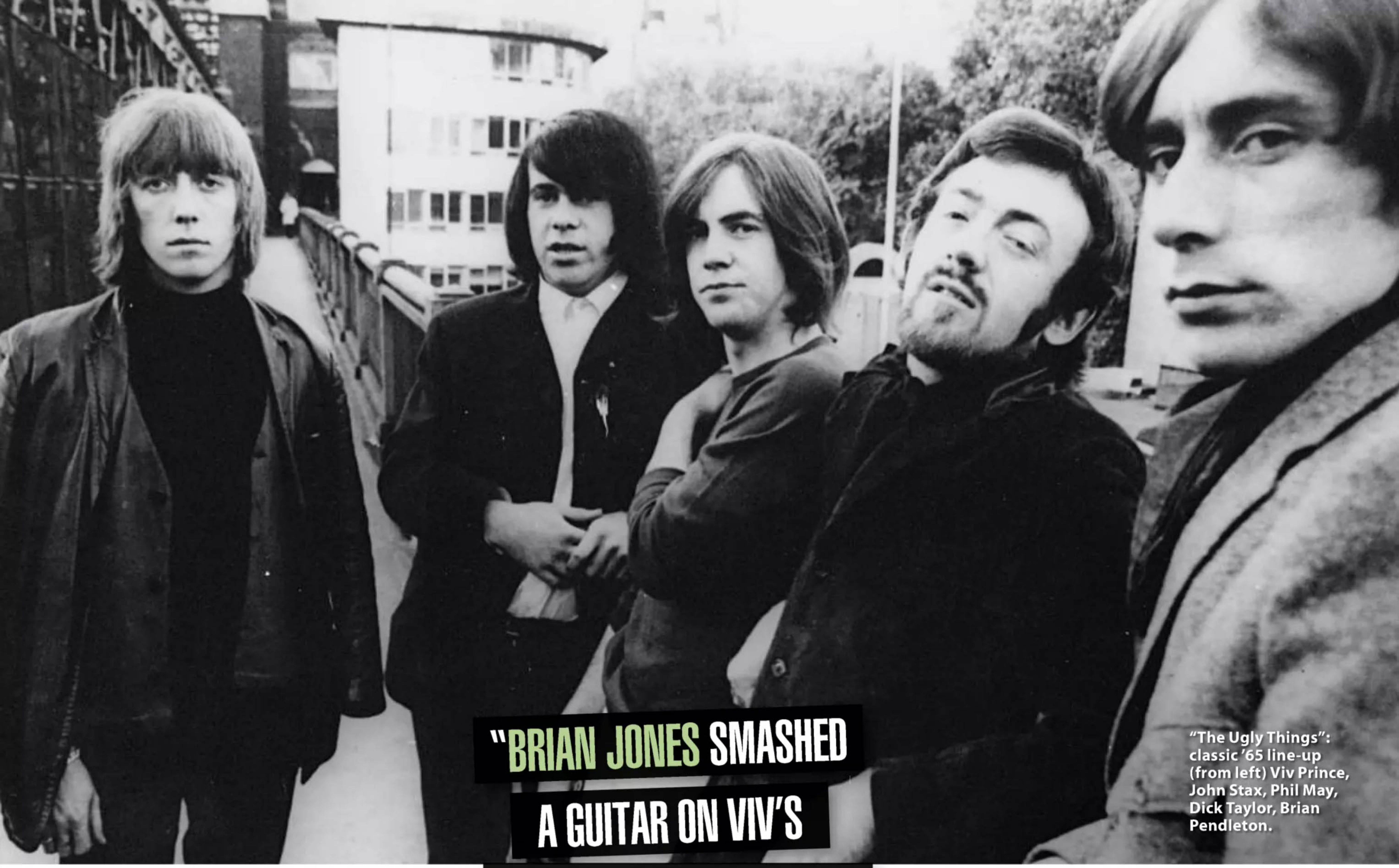
The tour began with singer Phil May – “a male, believe it or not!” joked one critic, on account of May’s shoulder-length hair – earmarked as Public Enemy Number One. By the end, though, it was the boozy and, even by rock standards, bizarre antics of the band’s drummer, Viv Prince, which had his colleagues begging for an end to the chaos.

After a particularly traumatic show at the New Plymouth Opera House on August 26, national newspaper The New Zealand Truth dubbed Prince “a mobile garbage heap”, spelling out a string of misdemeanours. Having spent the day drinking Old Granddad, a fiery local brew, Prince – dressed in grubby white cords, leopard-skin hat perched awkwardly atop his shaggy hair – had filled a shoe with alcohol, drunk from it, then leapt from behind his kit, brandishing a burning newspaper, hellbent on sending the historic hall up in flames. Then, as bill-topper Sandie Shaw was introduced, he staggered on-stage declaring “I’m immortal!”

Shaw was furious, his bandmates merely confused, especially when it came to Viv’s dead crayfish. “That was his constant companion,” says original bassist John Stax. “It was horrible. He’d set up camp on floors in hotel foyers where he’d entertain his guests with this crayfish on a piece of string. He reeked of stale piss, had froth round his mouth, and you’d just stay away from him.” Weeks later, Prince was sacked.

But he didn’t change his ways. After deputising for Keith Moon on a few Who dates, he opened a short-lived Soho club, Knuckles, handled publicity for the Hell’s Angels, then drifted into various decorating and building jobs. He gradually became the forgotten wild man of ’60s pop, the subject of all manner of strange tales, the quintessential Pretty Thing, their own Syd Barrett.

“We lost contact with Viv ages ago,” says Pretty Things’ vocalist Phil May. “He’s on the Costa Del Crime, hanging out with



"The Ugly Things": classic '65 line-up (from left) Viv Prince, John Stax, Phil May, Dick Taylor, Brian Pendleton.

his mates with cauliflower ears and bent noses. He doesn't seem to pay his phone bill because if you call him the line always goes dead…"

As with the mercurial Prince, the true story of The Pretty Things is as much bound up in legend as real life. Were they Rolling Stones imitators or garage rock originals? Misunderstood mavericks or victims of their own myth-making? The answer is a bit of both, with plenty of booze, acid and cocaine thrown in. But one thing is for certain. The spectre of the Stones has always loomed large.

> **"BRIAN JONES SMASHED A GUITAR ON VIV'S HEAD. THEN HE MELTED ALL OUR RECORDS AND STUCK THEM ON THE MIRRORS."**

PRETTY THINGS' GUITARIST DICK TAYLOR WAS AT Sidcup Art College with Keith Richards as the '60s began, made a legendary pre-Stones home recording with Mick and Keith as Little Boy Blue And The Blue Boys, and for a few months in 1962 was himself a Rolling Stone. But whereas the Stones soon quit the 'Dartford Delta', from where both groups hailed, The Pretty Things remained close to their roots. "They hit a pop nerve; we hit a cult nerve," says an unrepentant Taylor, who insists he has no regrets about quitting the Stones late in 1962. "I was stuck playing bass with them," he says. "I wanted to play the real thing – guitar."

Taylor is perhaps the key to the differing paths taken by the bands. With his beatnik beard and slightly older, sleepy-eyed gaze, he always looked more jazz buff than pop tart. "[Stones manager] Andrew Oldham would have got rid of him, just as he pushed Stuey [Ian Stewart] out," says bassist Stax. "Look at pictures of us," adds May. "I mean, newspapers would call us 'The Ugly Things'."

In truth, The Pretty Things rated no higher on the 'ugly' scale than most aspiring '60s beat and R&B combos. Singer May, who formed the band with Taylor in 1963 while they were studying at Central School of Art, might not have been as cute as Jagger, but his snarling attitude was a thing of beauty to all aspiring rock'n'roll rebels. Either side of him, fellow south-east London beat enthusiasts rhythm guitarist Brian Pendleton and John Stax veered from sensible showmanship to assaults on their instruments, depending on the mood. But as much as their look or grimy sound, it was that name, taken from a Bo Diddley track, that provoked most.

Having emerged via various art colleges, The Pretty Things instantly turned the heat on the Stones with a raw, Diddley-esque debut, Rosalyn (Number 41 in summer '64), closely followed by the similarly gritty Top 10 hit, Don't Bring Me Down. Headlines such as "Adults Hate Us More Than The Stones" followed. The Pretties also played through two of their peers' 15 watt amps, which John Stax recalls picking up at the Stones' Edith Grove flat. After Phil May inherited Jagger's notebook, detailing every Howlin' Wolf, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry song, they also sang to a very similar hymn-sheet. And their first rehearsals had been in Taylor's parents' back room, where months earlier Dick, Mick and Keith were devising the Dartford blues boom. "We were all born in the same mental – I mean maternity – hospital," laughs May.

Bo Diddley was all over The Pretty Things' spring '65 self-titled first LP, significantly swarthier than the Stones' first, with little concession to pop balladry. The band's underdog status was set, and since then their name has been an enduring motif of cultish cool. Bob Dylan – who befriended Pretties' rhythm guitarist Brian Pendleton, glimpsed briefly in Don't Look Back – gave them a nod in 1965 on Tombstone Blues ("The sweet pretty things are in bed now of course"). David Bowie, a regular at the band's earliest gigs who, says May, "had my name under God in his address book!", wrote Oh! You Pretty Things in part homage. Almost every Anglophile *Nuggets*-era garage band cites the Pretties as an influence.

What The Pretty Things represent has in many ways come to eclipse their work. Essentially art school amateurs, they hoped that the recruitment of ace session drummer Viv Prince in May 1964 would instil a new professionalism. "He was a great player," insists John Stax, who remembers Keith Moon and the fledgling Small Faces being among Prince's earliest champions. "Viv would crawl around the stage at the 100 Club and it was brilliant." Soon, Moon would repeat the trick at Who shows. "There was a lot of Keith in Viv," adds Taylor. "They were both driven by the same demons." ➢

When he joined the band, Prince sported a Perry Como haircut, though he quickly grew that out in favour of long, lank locks that rivalled Phil May's for shocking impact. In terms of mid-'60s subcultural cool, hair was at least as critical as a cranked up Vox AC30. And no one had more of it than May. Hysterical press reaction – which soon translated into riotous scenes at concerts, especially on the action-starved Continent – made the Pretties marked men.

"As art students, we'd been used to going home in fours and fives," says May, "because if you had long hair and a duffel coat, you'd get the shit kicked out of you. So after that, being in The Pretty Things was easy." Well, kind of.

"There was one particularly nasty incident after a gig in Trowbridge," Stax remembers. "We were packing up our stuff and a group of local thugs started coming towards us. Our driver, this flashy 22-year-old Adonis known as Phil The Greek, just opened up the boot and pulled out a 12-gauge shotgun. When he tried to fire it, the thing failed because it had been in the boot too long and rusted up. The police took us down to the station, but amazingly, they let us go after a few questions."

According to Stax, The Pretty Things' reputation is "all down to Phil's image and Viv's outrageousness. The other three of us were pretty pathetic when it came to raging."

But all five band members are implicated in the collective notoriety that surrounds 13 Chester Street, the fashionable address that gave The Pretty Things a much needed refuge. "It was a multi-storey building in Belgravia," remembers May, "owned by the father of a friend of ours, who had the basement. Everything was all glass and marble, Louis XV furniture, huge fireplaces and chandeliers, a fantastic place for partying."

Immortalised on a track on the band's first album, 13 Chester Street was briefly a focal point for Swinging London, with Christine Keeler, the Krays, Diana Dors and the increasingly belligerent Brian Jones regulars through its doors. "Brian and Viv used to have these knife fights when they were both out of it," says Phil May, "trying to stab each other with what we'd call girl's blouse penknives. Brian was so paranoid, and living with the enemy probably made matters worse."

One night, Jones returned home late to find his rivals listening to the Stones' Five By Five EP. "He came running in and wrapped this guitar around Viv's head," May recalls. "He thought we'd put it on to take the piss. A few days later, we came home to find that he'd melted all our records and stuck them on the mirrors."

With the booze flowing and soft drugs on the menu, pop paranoia could run both ways – although the Pretties insist they had good reason to be suspicious of their fellow Dartford deviants. If the band are to be believed, Brian Jones's famous hooped fisherman's jersey was copped from Brian Pendleton, who'd bought it on Carnaby Street only to discover that Jones had 'borrowed' it for a Ready Steady Go! date. They also insist that pressure was put on that show's producers not to book The Pretty Things after a single appearance in 1964. "[Loog Oldham's business partner] Tony Calder told us many years later that Oldham and Jagger had insisted that if they booked us again, they wouldn't get the Stones."

Soon after an horrific episode in Denmark in October 1965, when Viv Prince was savagely attacked by the brother of a Danish boxing champion at the end of an all-night drinking session, the perpetually drunk-and-disorderly drummer was asked to leave. The final straw came in Stockport, Lancashire, when Prince refused to perform because the adjoining bar had barred him from the premises. "What he hadn't realised was that he'd caused a load of aggro there the night before," says Dick Taylor. "It was sad, but at the same time, it was a relief," says John Stax. "Buoyed by the drink, he thought he was Viv Prince, King Of The World, that he could do anything he wanted. But by the end, our top pro had become the most unprofessional one in the group. He had to go."

By now, the countless controversies had all but eclipsed the music, and Record Mirror weren't alone in suggesting that The Pretty Things were now "a musical joke", the troublesome New Zealand trip regarded as a wasted opportunity. "We should have gone to America instead," insists Dick Taylor. "If we'd have gone, we'd have either got arrested, been shot or become famous."

TRIP BETTER SUITED TO THE PRETTY Things' artsy inclinations came in liquid or tab form – LSD. They'd been one of the first pop groups to come under the scrutiny of the drugs squad – though suggestions that they were hauled up in court 27 times in 1965 are, even by the band's account, grossly exaggerated. One particular track, £sd, a thinly veiled plug for the drug ("Yes, I need… LSD!") on the flip of the spring 1966 single, the ferocious, fuzz-laden Come See Me, confirmed that the band were letting go of R&B purism. In fact, they'd inadvertently started the process with a song recorded at the autumn '65 sessions for *Get The Picture?*, the extraordinary Can't Stand The Pain, an unprecedented piece of proto-psych with May's snotty voice floating over an eerie, bottleneck-enriched backing.

"Perhaps it was ahead of its time," says Stax, "but we [thought] it was just a bit airy-fairy. I remember thinking at the time, This has no balls. For me, if it's not rock'n'roll, forget it." Months later, during the winter '66/67 sessions for third album, *Emotions*, Stax quit. Brian Pendleton, who'd been the band's Brian Jones figure, had walked weeks earlier, exhausted, broke and on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Both May and Taylor are still irked by producer Steve Rowland's string-driven arrangements that "bland out" *Emotions*, issued in spring '67, though it's the record

STRONGER THAN DIRT

Six of The Pretty Things' 1960s best. By Kieron Tyler.

ROSALYN

(Fontana single, June 1964)
If the long hair and scruffiness weren't enough, the juddering attack of their debut single repelled squares everywhere.

CAN'T STAND THE PAIN

(Fontana B-side, December 1965)
Flip Midnight To Six Man for this moody, fragmented mid-tempo examination of the psyche.

COME SEE ME

(Fontana single, April 1966)
The definitive crunching, riff-driven stomper. This was as polished as their punk R&B got; plus great unhinged guitar solo.

DEFECTING GREY

(Columbia single, November 1967)
A whole psychedelic album in one song. Everything was showcased – sitar, fuzz guitar, weird rhythms, atonal shifts.

ALEXANDER

(*Even More Electric Banana*, De Wolfe, 1968)
Psych highlight, from the third LP recorded by their alter ego The Electric Banana.

THE LONELIEST PERSON

(*S.F. Sorrow*, Columbia album track, December 1968)
S.F. Sorrow was consistent, but this is an stand-out. With the tempo brought down, Phil May sounds so desolate, so wounded. Burnt out.

THE PRETTY THINGS
ROSALYN
BIG BOSS MAN
fontana
electric banana
Defecting grey
Mr. evasion
the pretty things

Covetable things: sleeve artwork for debut 45 Rosalyn; 1967 single Defecting Grey; and *Even More Electric Banana*, the third album the band recorded for music library de Wolfe as The Electric Banana.

Before the wheels came off: MK1 line-up sitting pretty on 1957 Italian Vespa.

> "WE SHOULD HAVE GONE TO AMERICA – WE WOULD HAVE EITHER GOT ARRESTED, BEEN SHOT OR BECOME FAMOUS."

that blows open the Pretties' innate creativity. But as with the previous year's extraordinary Midnight To Six Man single – a prototype for the MC5 if ever there was one – and the seemingly chart-bound cover of Ray Davies' House In The Country, their attempts to break the mould fell largely on deaf ears. "From then on, we kept changing our style," reckons Phil May, "and no one could keep up – not even the band!"

When May and Dick Taylor reformed The Pretty Things in 1980, it was their tough R&B songs that the punkish audiences wanted to hear. But after the '80s psych revival, it was *S.F. Sorrow*, the band's 'lost' rock opera from December 1968, that became their most cherished legacy. Weaving together a rich hippy-era patchwork of musical styles – Eastern, Celtic and Carnaby Street, with added vocal harmonies from the incoming Skip Allen and Alan 'Wally' Waller – with a loose storyline about a boy searching for life's meaning, *S.F. Sorrow* has often been called the first 'rock opera'. "That was one of the biggest highs," says Phil May. "It was pure art school creation, totally different to everything else. When we left the studio at 5am we'd go home flying."

But protracted recording sessions at Abbey Road, under the watchful eye of Pink Floyd producer Norman Smith, and a much delayed American release on Motown subsidiary Rare Earth, meant that The Who's *Tommy* picked up all the plaudits. To cap it all, Dick Taylor was so impressed by the album that he felt his work was done and very soon quit the band.

The record's commercial failure was a severe setback for the band, but neither that, nor Taylor's departure, delivered a knockout blow. However, when the follow-up, 1970's *Parachute*, was voted Album Of The Year by Rolling Stone and still nobody noticed, Pretty perennial May was moved – briefly – to turn his back on the band. "We'd become a marketing nightmare," he admits. "Just when you thought you understood the band, we'd moved on."

After a decade of mishaps and misdemeanours, it seemed as if The Pretty Things were truly born under a bad sign. But their luck seemed to change when two of their earliest admirers, now international superstars, lent a helping hand. In 1973, David Bowie recorded Rosalyn and Don't Bring Me Down for *Pin-Ups*, a tribute album to his own youthful passions. The following year, Led Zeppelin came to the rescue, offering the May-led Pretty Things a two-album deal via their Swan Song label. But with most of the advance going up the band's collective nose, they once again collapsed in a directionless heap.

Since reforming "for good" in 1980, the band have become cult legends, defiant anti-heroes who sold a few records in their time but never sold out. "The Pretty Things wasn't a business," May maintains. "I mean, we never considered ourselves to be professional musicians. It was a way of life. And a lot of the decisions that were taken reflected that."

And Viv Prince? After a few discreet enquiries, MOJO tracked Prince down to a small village outside Faro, in Portugal's Algarve. He's into sunshine these days. And fruit.

"I've got an orange grove, but it's not in very good condition. There's not enough money in oranges." He has also discovered the delights of Figo, a "highly potent" local brew distilled from figs. "I've had a few goes with that," he says, "but I try and stick to wine and beer."

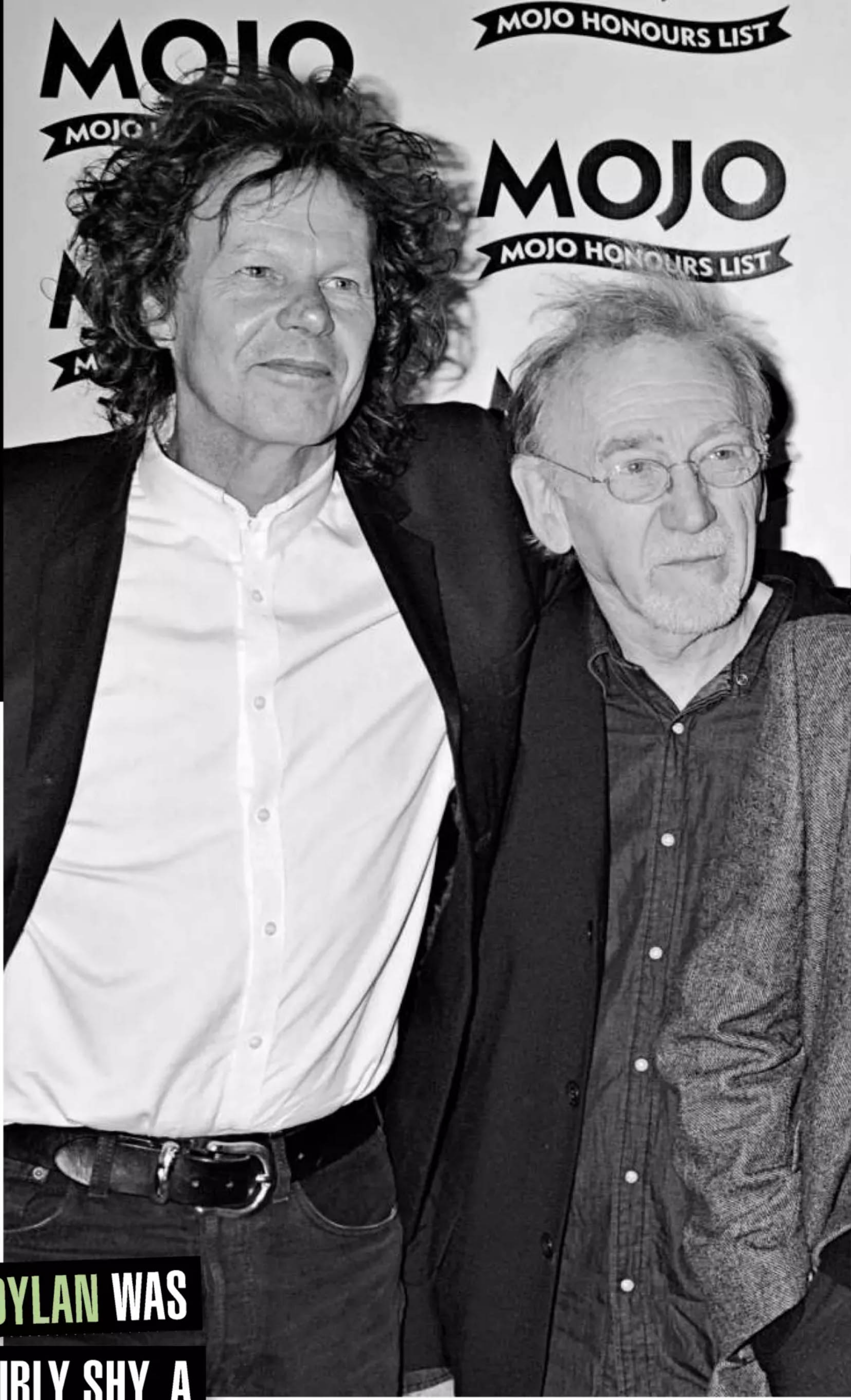
He still owns what he calls a "wreckage kit", but neither drumming nor The Pretty Things play any real part in Prince's life. He's proud of his achievements with the band, but has little time for rock'n'roll mythology. He does, however, remember New Zealand. "The place was so Presbyterian," he says, "and we were determined to enjoy ourselves there. Anyway, it was all good publicity…" Believing that Britain has gone to the dogs, citing in part the rise of knife crime, he has no plans to return home.

So what does Viv reckon to The Pretty Things' legacy? "Oh, they've got a cult reputation all right," he laughs. "They must be the longest persevering band still getting nowhere in the fucking world!"

PRETTIES NOW! Turn the page to read 'Things singer Phil May on decades of rock abuse, their new album and more…

STILL CRAZY!

As his band hits 50, Phil May talks to Lois Wilson about Dylan, drinking and the brand-new Pretty Things LP.



Rex

FEBRUARY 2015 SAW THE RELEASE OF A Pretty Things box set, *Bouquets From A Cloudy Sky*, a vast career survey featuring the group's 11 albums, beginning with their 1965 self-titled debut and ending at 2007's *Balboa Island*, plus rarities, DVDs and a 10-inch replica acetate. The band's story will be brought right up to date in July with the issue of their 12th album, *The Sweet Pretty Things (Are In Bed Now, Of Course…)*. Named after the first line of Bob Dylan's Tombstone Blues, it captures the current line-up – founders Phil May and Dick Taylor, plus guitarist Frank Holland, bassist George Woosey and drummer Jack Greenwood – in the studio for the first time.

The album was put down live to tape via a Trident Series 80 mixing consol at 811 studios in Cowfold, West Sussex, with producer/engineer Mark St John, and remains faithful to the group's raucous take on rock'n'roll. "People keep expecting us to run out of puff at some point but it hasn't happened yet," says May about the group's continuing endurance. "The energy we create is unstoppable, it has its own motor, it's more a case of we can't turn the bloody thing off."

> "BOB DYLAN WAS INCREDIBLY SHY, A REAL ENIGMA. HE WAS INTRIGUED BY US AND THE FEELING WAS MUTUAL."

Why use the first line of Dylan's Tombstone Blues as the new album's title?

We were looking back when we were putting together the box set and got to thinking about when we met Bob Dylan. He came over to the UK in '65, we got a message, Bob's in town, he loves your music, is desperate to meet you. They sent a limo, took us to him. Every time he came to London after that, we'd be on tour and miss him, there was always an answering-machine message waiting. We felt that "the sweet Pretty Things are in bed now, of course…" was his comment on us.

What were your impressions of him?

He was incredibly shy, a real enigma, he wasn't rock'n'roll, but he loved it, I think that's why he wanted to meet us, he wanted a rock band for himself. He and Dick played guitar together, we talked about the bass sounds on [1966 single] Come See Me, where we used fuzz tone bass. His knowledge of electric music was slim, he didn't know about overloading tone benders and covering speakers so you could jack it up without distortion. He was intrigued and the respect was mutual; we were totally into what he was doing. He inspired me to write what I felt.

During the making of this album you were very ill. What happened?

It was really just the result of 51 years of self abuse, of drink and drugs. I came off stage at the last concert in Zaragoza on the Spanish leg of our tour and just collapsed on the floor. I went to hospital, gave up smoking. I feel fantastic now.

Did you give up drinking?

No, I still like a drink.

You recorded live in the studio. Have you ever recorded any other way?

We would never have got the sound we wanted on *S.F. Sorrow* if we had recorded live bass, drums, guitar then vocal overdubs, and the fact we got what we wanted was down to the determination of the people working at Abbey Road, especially Norman Smith. They bent every technical envelope to the max, they were taping valve basses to tea trolleys, they would do anything to get the right sound. We had The Beatles recording one side, Pink Floyd the other, you felt you were in a reactor in the middle of London, pumping out this incredible music. We never wanted to leave, but we had no money so we'd have to go off and play four nights in Germany, four in Sweden, and then we'd come back and record. But that was good, because the band was constantly playing so when we hit the studio we were really sharp.

In the sleevenotes to *Bouquets From A Cloudy Sky* David Gilmour said, "The Pretty Things made the Stones look tame." Discuss!

In a way, yes – it's like when someone at school is really cool, and you think, I could never be that cool – but then in a way because you're not conforming to this accepted view of what makes someone cool, you actually become uber cool. Mick Jagger and Andrew Loog Oldham, and to some extent Keith Richards, cultivated the Stones' cool aloof attitude – and it was an attitude, it wasn't necessarily how they were. You know, the Stones

MOJO
MOJO HONOURS LIST

Never say die: The Pretty Things as they were in 2009, picking up their MOJO Heroes award. Dick Taylor and Phil May are second and third from right.

once got us kicked off [TV programme] Ready Steady Go! because we were the band they feared – they thought we would take their territory from them.

The box set came with paperwork that dealt with the band's litigation and the fact you hadn't been paid. Did you feel that fans needed and wanted to know about this?

Yes, because I always felt it must be really hard supporting The Pretty Things; your mates like the Stones and Led Zeppelin, they become mega huge, and the band you like, it doesn't happen for them, and they must think, Am I the only loony who likes this? I wanted to pull back the curtains and show what was going on behind the scenes.

So how did you get ripped off in the first place?

EMI dealt the band a lethal blow by giving *S.F. Sorrow* and *Parachute* to Tamla Motown in the US. We were a bargaining chip, because Tamla said that if they didn't get us, EMI wouldn't get to issue Tamla in the UK. Tamla were behind with their release schedule, so we came out three months after [The Who's] *Tommy* in the US and that destroyed us. Everyone said *S.F. Sorrow* was a copy of *Tommy* but it had been made 14 months before.

A replica of the Defecting Grey acetate was also included. What does that song represent in the band's history?

It was the turning point, hugely important, it began our journey. Before we were a pop band, we saw an album as five A sides and five B sides, with Defecting Grey we started seeing making music differently, we had producer Norman Smith, he was pivotal. So he was the acid in our musical evolution. It led to *S.F. Sorrow*.

As well as the classic '60s albums, the box set includes the '70s records that are less well-known. How do you view those records now?

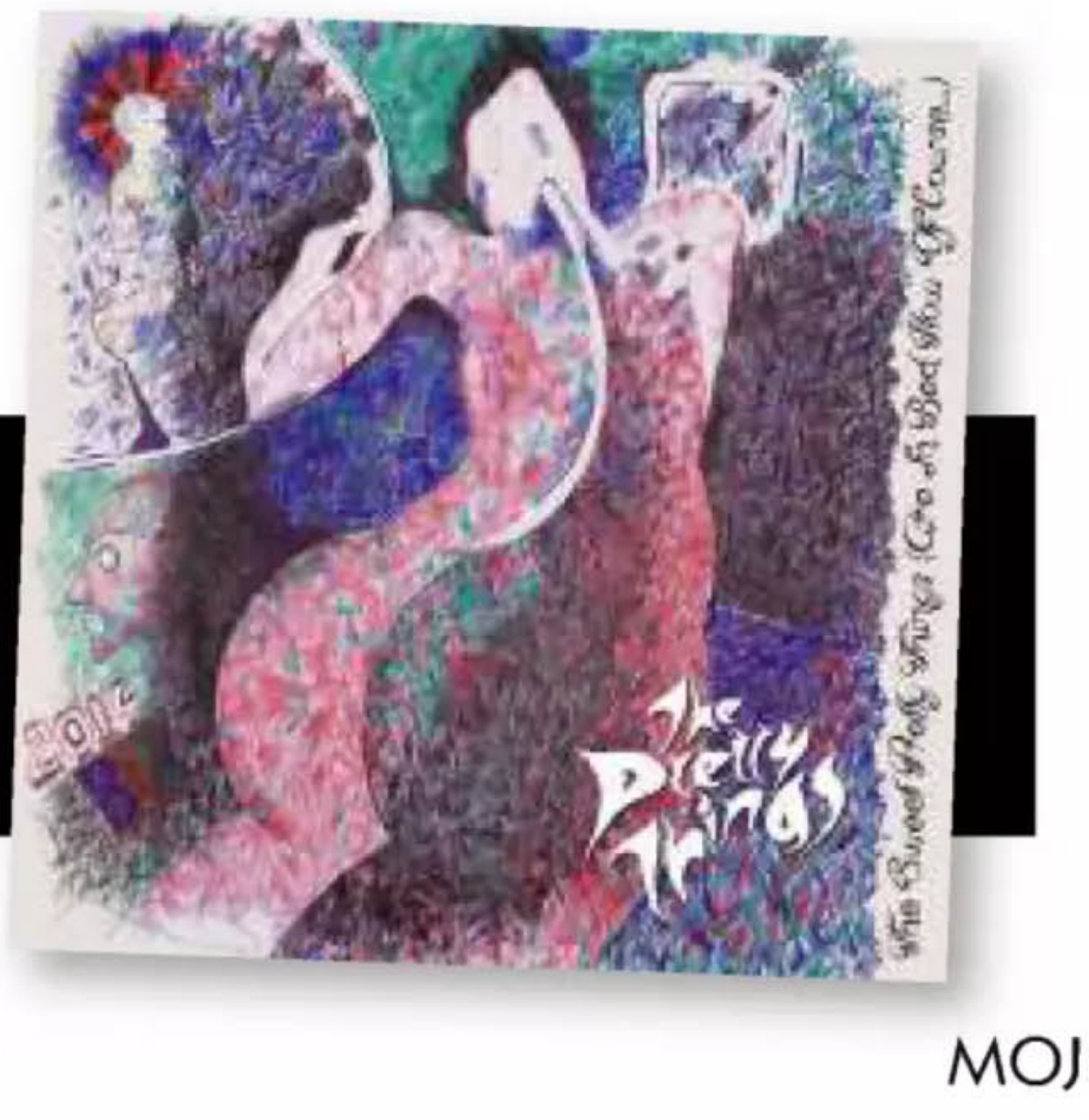
There are some great songs on *Silk Torpedo* and *Savage Eye*, and I'm proud of the lyrics, but we were outside of our spiritual comfort zone. I don't think we should have been a stadium band. We did it but somehow it didn't fit. It was like putting on a nice suit that isn't really for you.

What was it like being signed to Zeppelin's Swan Song?

Everyone says we must have been so made up, but you've got to remember there was mutual respect, Jimmy Page had played on our second album [1965's *Get The Picture*], he'd been around the band. And Swan Song wasn't a boutique label, it wasn't about ego, there was real musical integrity there. But with *Savage Eye*, the contracts on half of the US tour weren't returned. We'd played the first half with The Kinks and Joe Walsh but missed out on touring with the Beach Boys and ELO. We came back to the UK, Peter [Grant] was great, he just told us to make another album, but we were like, 'No one has heard *Savage Eye* yet!' It was unfinished business in our minds – we were fatally wounded by that. We staggered on, but the bullet was in. We had a huge fight, and I left.

PRETTY ROWDY TODAY

New album *The Sweet Pretty Things (Are In Bed Now, Of Course…)*, out now on Repertoire.

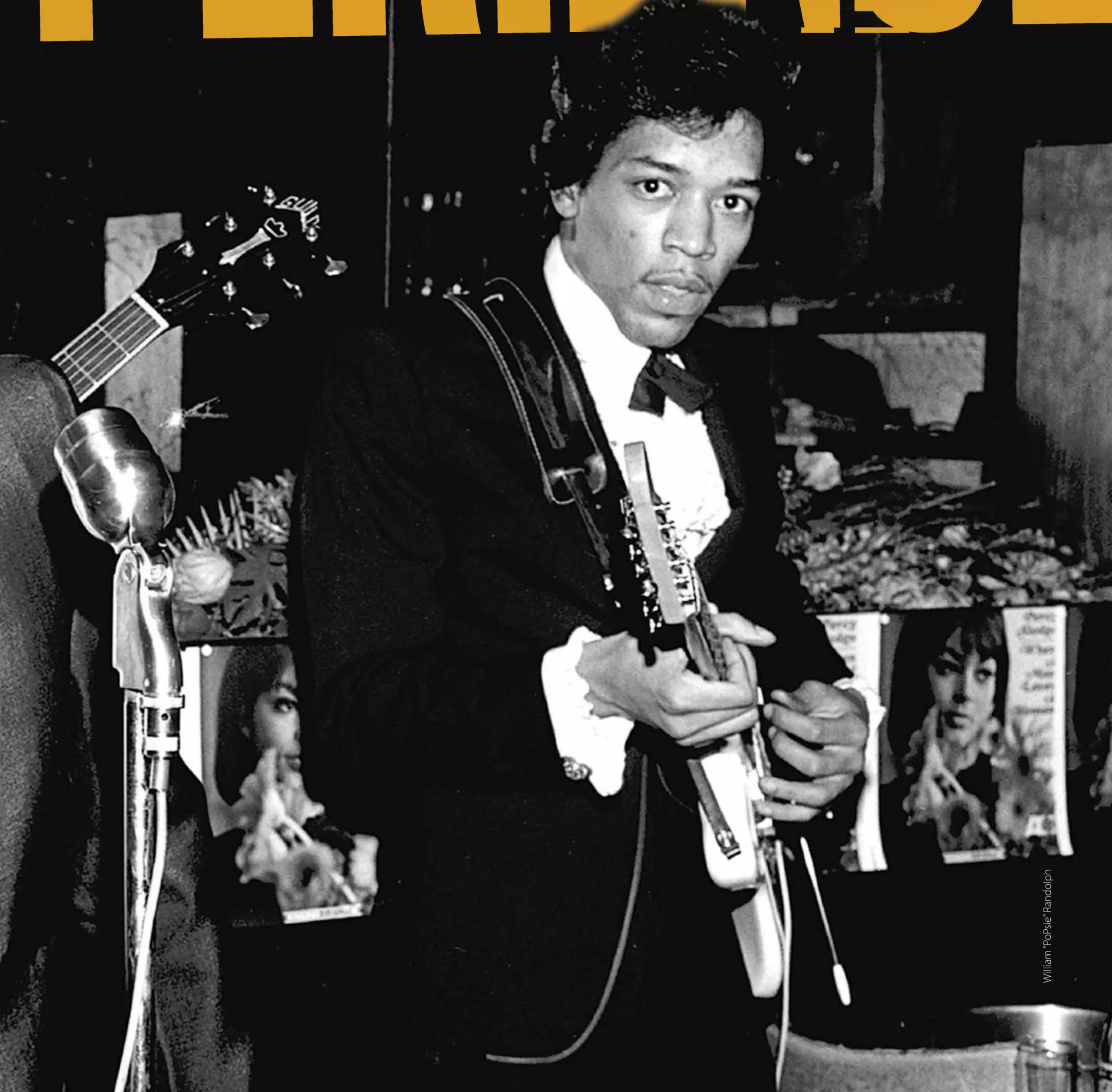


A NEW EX

Charles R. Cross chronicles the early days of Jimi Hendrix. From the backstreets of Seattle to the juke joints of the South, it's a tale of desperation, prejudice and, above all, self-belief...

He got the look: with Wilson Pickett at an Atlantic Records party in May 1966.

PERIENCE



William "PoPsie" Randolph

IT WAS AN INAUSPICIOUS START. Years before he became known as rock's greatest guitar player, Jimi Hendrix was the unconfirmed greatest air guitarist in Seattle.

"Jimi used to play air guitar on the broom," laughs his brother Leon Hendrix. "He'd run around the house and pretend he was Elvis. He'd play the broom, and there would be a trail of straw stretching from room to room."

Family snaps: with his mum and his first guitar; (bottom) an early, perhaps unexpected influence.

Hendrix began to 'play' the broom around 1953, aged 11, the year that he began to take notice of popular music. Though he would eventually find an appreciation for blues and R&B, his initial musical tastes were more mainstream. "We'd always listen to The Hit Parade Top 10," recalls Jimmy Williams, his best friend from those early days. Inspired by what they heard, Williams and Hendrix would then attempt to perform the radio hits of the day, by the likes of Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Perry Como, with Jimi using his air guitar as Jimmy sang. Almost three years later, when Jimi finally acquired an acoustic guitar – a one-stringed affair bought from a paraplegic neighbour for $5 – the first song he learnt to play was Dean Martin's Memories Are Made of This.

> "His first guitar was a one-stringed affair bought from a neighbour for $5"

Dean Martin
Capitol
Memories Are Made of This

Hendrix's early skills as a musician were not impressive, and few in his neighbourhood noticed of the young guitarist. That same year in school, Jimi received a grade F in music. When he initially brought his one-string guitar to school it was more about fashion than musical accomplishment – he carried the instrument on his back, where it was best kept.

It wasn't until he was 16 that Jimi acquired an electric guitar; many of his friends recall it as the single happiest day of his life. His girlfriend at the time, Carmen Goudy, said Jimi could barely contain his enthusiasm when his father bought him the cheap, right-handed Supro Ozark. "I've got a guitar!" he screamed to her into the phone. "I told him that he already had a guitar," Goudy said, "because he had the acoustic." Jimi told her this was a "real" guitar and ran to her house with it. They walked together to Seattle's Meany Park where Jimi began to tinker with the instrument, which he'd already re-strung so that he could play it left-handed. At this early stage, however, Jimi displayed more air-guitar skill than any real aptitude for the instrument. "He'd pick his guitar and try to make a sound he had heard," Goudy says. "When he couldn't find it on the guitar, he'd make the sound with his mouth. He'd pick and pick and pick."

Graduating from Dean Martin covers, the first song Hendrix learnt on electric guitar was Tall Cool One by The Wailers. The Wailers hailed from nearby Tacoma, and their brand of soul-powered, white R&B would remain a noted influence on Hendrix; he saw them live in '56 when they played local clubs, including the Spanish Castle. When Goudy complimented Jimi on how good his take on Tall Cool One sounded, he was non-plussed: "Do you know how many times I had to play it to figure out how to get that right sound out?"

If the guitar exemplified the best thing about Jimi's teenage years, the death of his mother was certainly the worst. Lucille Jeter Hendrix had long suffered from alcoholism, and had flitted in and out of her son's life during the previous few years. Her death from a ruptured spleen in February 1958 haunted Jimi for the rest of his life. Lucille was only 32 when she died, and had six children with Jimi's father Al. Her death was made worse by the fact that Al – who was also an alcoholic – had refused to let Jimi or his brother Leon attend their mother's funeral.

"He never really forgave our dad for that," said Leon. From that point forward, Jimi's mother became one of his strongest artistic muses, showing up in his private journals, and in the songs he began to write in early adulthood. "Mama became an angel to him," Leon said. "He told me he was sure she was an angel, and she was following us around." Lucille Hendrix would become an ethereal figure that could be traced via a half dozen Hendrix songs from Angel to Little Wing. When Jimi decided to paint a woman's name on the front of his guitar, his aunt thought he might use the name of his mother. "Then I think he realised," Delores Jeter Hamm recalled, "that B.B. King had already taken that one."

When Jimi left the Supro Ozark guitar in a club overnight in the autumn of 1959, it was ➢

William "PoPsie" Randolph, Betty Jean Morgan (2), Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy

Made up: backstage at the Saville Theatre in London, June 1967.

≺ stolen – a calamity that was repeated numerous times in the next few years. This particular instrument was only replaced when members of The Rocking Kings, one of the teenage bands Jimi joined that year, felt sorry enough for him to pitch in and buy him a new one – a white Danelectro Silvertone with matching amp, from Sears, Roebuck for $49.95. This time Jimi did paint a girl's name on the guitar – that of his high-school girlfriend Betty Jean Morgan, her first two names gracing the instrument in swirly, decidedly unprofessional hand-lettering.

INDEED, HENDRIX'S MUSIC CAREER STARTED WITH LESS than a bang. At his very first paid gig – in the basement of a synagogue – he was fired from a then-nameless band for being too flashy, trying to make up for lack of chops with sheer speed. His approach was at odds with the R&B material favoured by most Seattle bands, although a number of acts sought to go beyond covers of material by such as Little Richard, Fats Domino and Chubby Checker and use jazz elements in their playing. While Hendrix was influenced by the pre-grunge grit of The Wailers, he was also enthralled by local guitarist Butch Snipes, who'd borrowed T-Bone Walker's trick of playing behind his back and with his teeth. Also key in Jimi's musical education was Dave Lewis, a local keyboard player.

"Everyone in Seattle was playing Louie Louie with three chords," recalls Larry Coryell, himself a rising guitar player on the Seattle scene at the time. "Dave Lewis played his version with two chords, and he was the best."

Seattle had a relatively small African-American population but its music scene was more integrated than most in America at the time. Though Jimi's neighbourhood also birthed Bumps Blackwell and Quincy Jones, and served as the launching pad for Ray Charles, by Jimi's era most bands were mixing R&B and rock, crossing genres and race lines. "The scene was influenced by African-American culture," observed Coryell. "There was also an originality to the music, part of which came out of the fact that we were so geographically isolated, by mountains. Not as many touring bands came through town, but the ones that did had a huge influence."

When Bill Doggett played Seattle, Hendrix not only saw the show but also followed Doggett's guitar player Billy Butler around for hours – Jimi pestered him to demonstrate how to play Honky Tonk until Butler finally relented. Jimi's musical interests began to include the blues but also took in popular music like Duane Eddy, who was Hendrix's first real guitar hero thanks to his thundering version of The Peter Gunn Theme. "He also loved Come On by Earl King," Coryell recalls. "Every band in town had to play that one." B.B. King remained an influence, and The Rocking Kings, the teenage band that Jimi played with the longest, played songs like Every Day I Have The Blues and Driving Wheel. A Rocking Kings set might include C.C. Rider (the original R&B version as done by Chuck Willis), Hank Ballard's version of The Twist (which was slower than the Chubby Checker hit), popular numbers like Rockin' Robin or Do You Want To Dance, covers of hits by The Coasters, Fats Domino and, almost always, songs by Duane Eddy and Chuck Berry. The band also played their own versions of local favourites David's Mood and Louie Louie. "We mixed blues, jazz, and rock," recalled Lester Exkano, the band's drummer. "We'd play anything that kept people dancing." The songs were driven by Exkano's unusual drum sound, which he called "a slop beat". "It was more of a shuffle," Exkano explained, "which made it easier to dance to. It was definitely a black sound, but our shows were mixed, and everybody came."

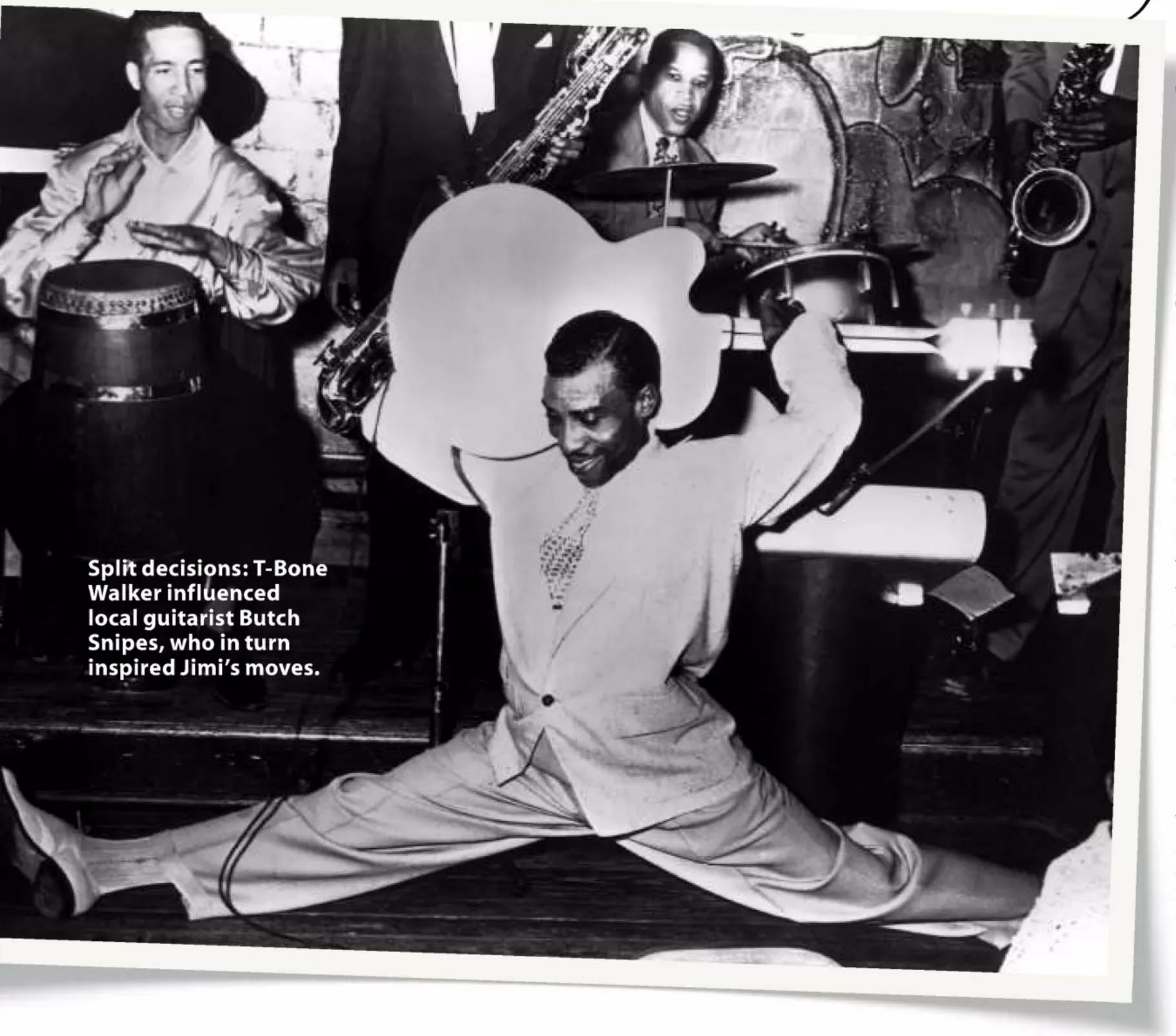
> "Jimi played this wild stuff, they couldn't dance to it. They just stared at him."

The musical amalgamation that was the Seattle music scene came together most obviously at the Spanish Castle, south of the city. Here, in the Northwest's premier dance hall, local bands played to thousands of teenagers, black and white. Hendrix saw a number of shows at the Castle and played there at least twice. It was instrumental in shaping his view that mixing genres was not only possible but preferable, and it made such an impression that Jimi later wrote a song expounding the glory of the club: Spanish Castle Magic included on the Experience's second album, *Axis: Bold As Love*.

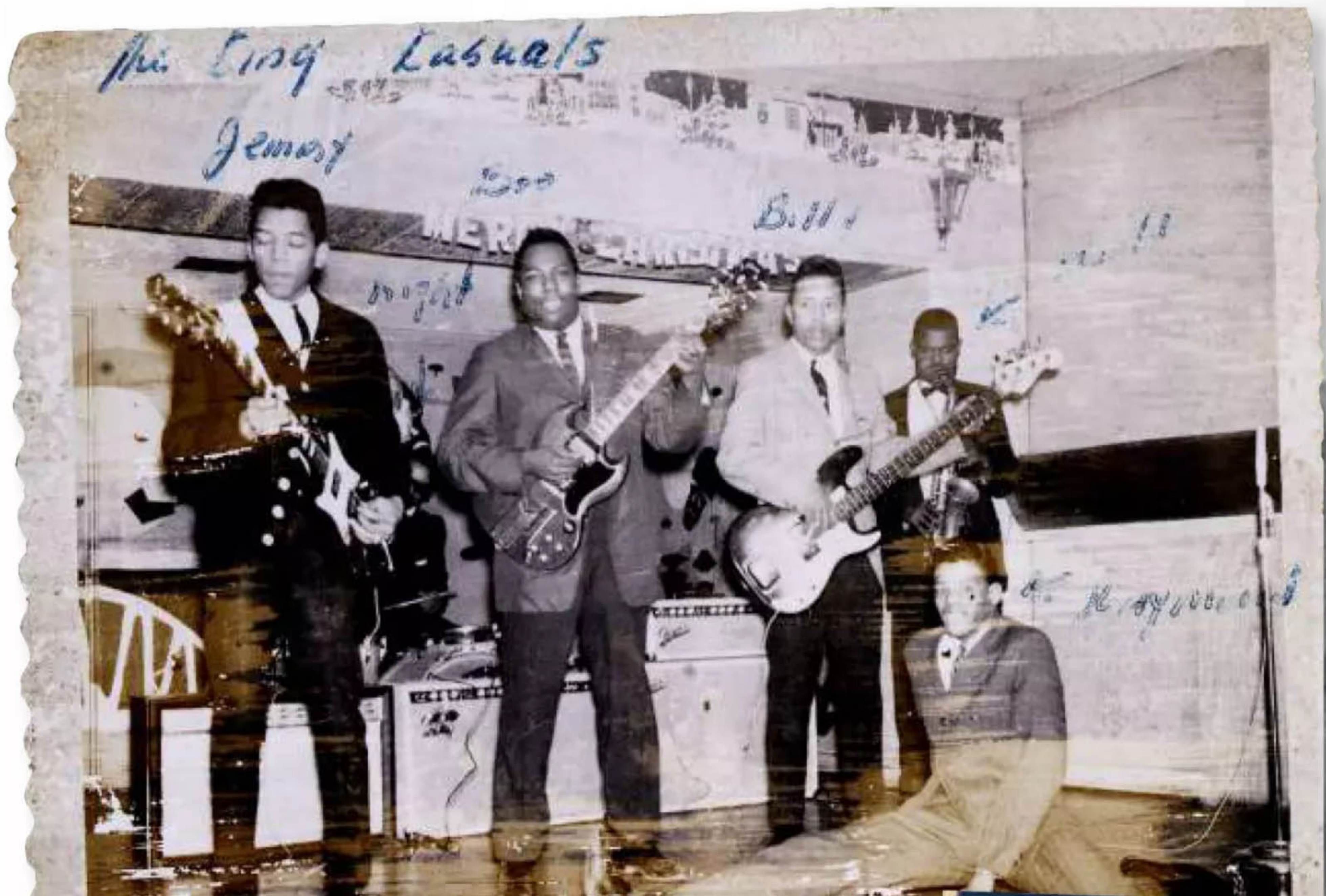
Stories about Jimi jamming with bands at the Spanish Castle have popped up over the years, but the truth is probably less exciting that the rumours. "We were so darn nervous!" Lester Exkano said, recalling Jimi's first show with The Rocking Kings at the Castle. While Hendrix was developing as a decent guitar player, few thought he was special. What was evident was his desire to learn. He would frequently convince keyboard player Dave Lewis to let him entertain the crowd during set breaks at the latter's shows. These 10-minute spotlights gave Jimi a chance to rehearse in front of a crowd and try out some of his antics in a forum where he had nothing to lose. As Lewis would later recall, Jimi frequently managed to shock the older, sophisticated audience. "He would play this wild stuff, but the people couldn't dance to it. They just stared at him," laughs Dave Lewis.

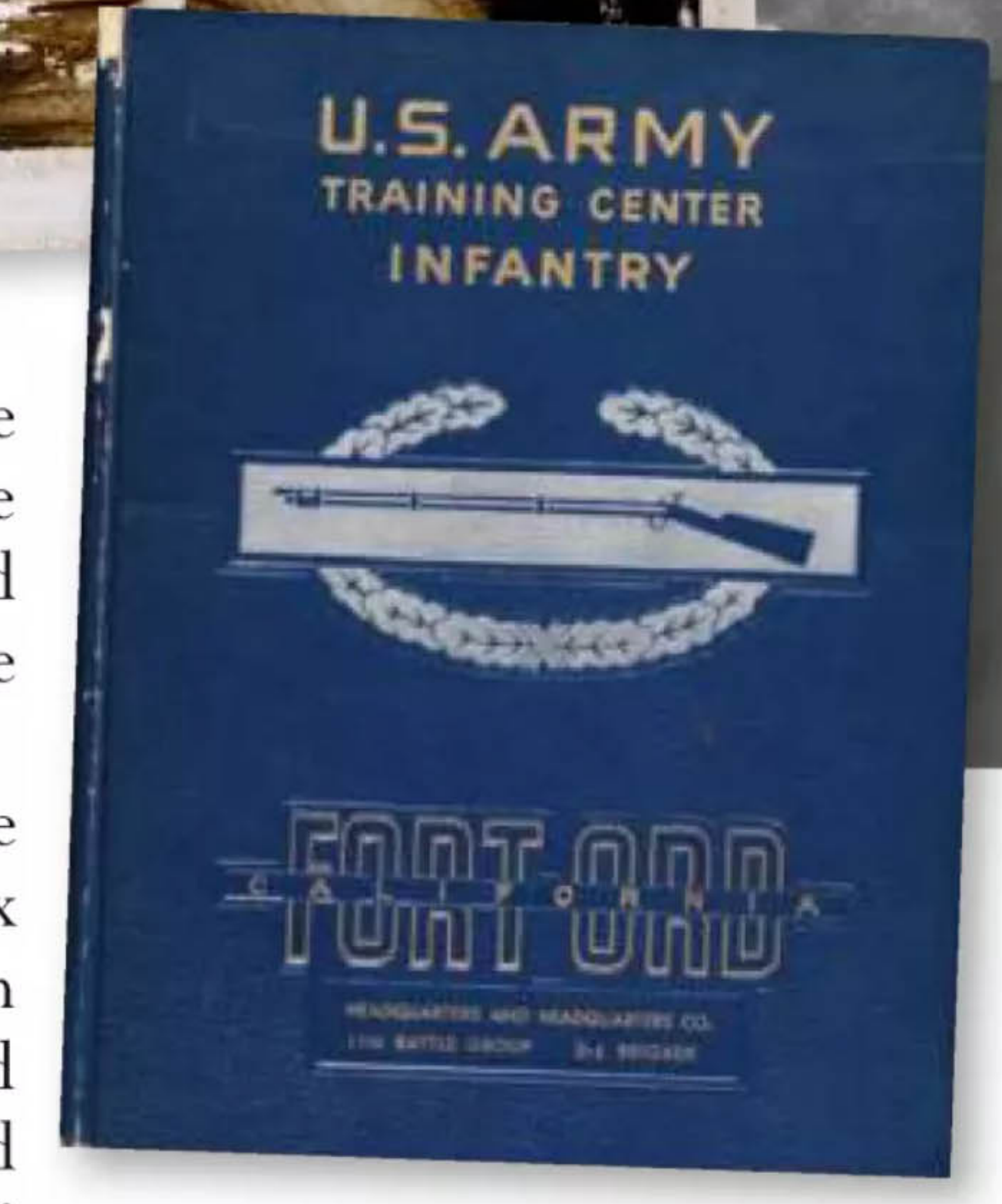
By 1961 Jimi had dropped out of school and was attempting to make a living as a musician – but failing and living off his father. That May Jimi was arrested twice for driving in a stolen car. At a subsequent court hearing – where he faced up to five years in jail – Jimi said he planned to join the army and thus his sentence was deferred. By the end of May he had left Seattle for basic training in California, depositing his guitar under his bed at home in Seattle.

WHEN JIMI FINISHED BASIC TRAINING HE received the army assignment he most hoped for: he joined the 101st Airborne as a paratrooper and was sent to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The posting proved to be a musical and cultural awakening, marking Jimi's first venture into the American South. Exposed to a rich R&B and blues scene, he had his



Split decisions: T-Bone Walker influenced local guitarist Butch Snipes, who in turn inspired Jimi's moves.





All the young dudes: 'Jemmy' and pals giving it some action with The King Kasuals in 1962 (above left), shortly after leaving the army; looking sharp with Curtis Knight and The Squires (above) – his style soon got a little wilder.

guitar shipped out to him and began to haunt the clubs on or near the base. One evening, when he attempted some of the Duane Eddy chops he'd tried in Seattle, the African-American audience looked at him as if he were mad.

Despite this setback, in Kentucky Jimi had the fortune to meet up with bass player Billy Cox. Cox was walking by a base rehearsal hall one day when he heard Jimi practising. "This was a sound I had never heard before," Cox recalls. "I went in and introduced myself to him. It was about that quick." The pair formed a band they called The Kasuals and music once again took centrestage in Jimi's life. Years later, after Hendrix had found fame in London, he told reporters serendipity had aided him in getting out of the army exactly when he wanted to leave, claiming that on his 26th leap out of an airplane he had broken an ankle. Jimi's army medical records, however, suggest that he'd tried several methods to get out of the service, including pretending to be a homosexual and masturbating in the middle of the bunkhouse. In Hendrix's medical records at the time, he checked 'homosexual' as one of the many things he claimed disqualified him from further military service.

After 13 months in the army it was clear that Jimi wanted out. When he'd joined he'd listed himself as a student. Now, on later paperwork, he described himself as a musician. When the army finally relented Jimi was free to resume full-time musical duties.

IT WAS ONLY AFTER ESCAPING THE ARMY THAT JIMI began his real musical apprenticeship. He and Cox first travelled to Indianapolis where they entered a Battle Of The Bands, playing a version of Soldier Boy by The Shirelles. "We would have won if there wasn't another band, The Presidents, that the local girls liked better," Cox recalls. Their second place finish didn't earn them the prize, but their impact was such that The Presidents' guitarist Alphonso Young decided to quit his group and join Jimi and Billy. Young was the first of many mentors that Jimi found in the South. Young was more experienced than Jimi, and was considered by most to be a better player, at least initially. "I would make my strings squeal," said Young, recalling how he impressed Hendrix.

That year Jimi showed a commitment to practising the guitar that was remarkable. He went to bed practising, he slept with the guitar on his chest, and the first thing he did when he woke up was to keep on practising. His obsession with his guitar garnered him the nickname Marbles, largely because his neighbours thought he had 'lost his marbles'. Young once saw Jimi going into a cinema with his guitar, unable to put the instrument down long enough to watch a film.

Another of Jimi's mentors, Johnny Jones of Nashville's Imperials, often observed Hendrix sitting in front of a club stage, watching. "He was just a kid," Jones recalled, "but he had a mission." During one set break, Jimi asked if he could hold Jones's guitar. Jimi promised to sit in front of the stage with it, and not break the instrument. Jones agreed, and the next week Jimi asked if Jones could keep his amp on. Jones left the amp on to appease Jimi, and during set breaks Jimi would quietly strum the guitar, more in an attempt to discover the secrets of Jones's tone than to entertain the crowd.

Jones had learnt from Freddie King, Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker and Robert Lockwood Jr, and Hendrix quickly absorbed those influences, some of which he had missed growing up in Seattle. Better yet, B.B. King and Albert King came through town that year, and through Jones Jimi met them both. "When B.B. came in, you should have seen Jimi's eyes light up," Jones recalled. "And to see him around Albert King… you'd have thought Jimi was in heaven." Hendrix pestered Albert King with questions about his finger-style and how he managed to bend the strings horizontally. Most young players would simply tell Albert how good he was; Jimi was impertinent enough to ask him how he *got* so good. While there was a strong sense of machismo among blues players at the time, many of these established players felt so unthreatened by Jimi that they shared their trade secrets, convinced that this skinny, unkempt boy would never challenge them. Jimi, however, had a deep streak of ambition and an inner belief in his destiny. The practising began to pay off. Jimi's development as a player came from both his innate physical ability – his fingers were abnormally long and he could fret with his thumb – and his sponge-like ability to mimic those he learned from. He quickly assimilated different styles of playing and mastered techniques far quicker than his mentors thought possible.

Between 1963 and 1965, the chitlin' circuit – the network of African-American venues throughout the eastern and southern States – became Jimi Hendrix's stamping ground. Playing with The King Kasuals, or as was more often the case, in other bands as a hired back-up musician, Hendrix had soon seen the inside of every juke joint and tavern from Florida to Texas. His touring employers included Carla Thomas, The Marvelettes, Tommy Tucker, Slim Harpo, Jerry Butler, Chuck Jackson, Solomon Burke, King Curtis, The Isley Brothers, and Little Richard, among others. Only the ➢

Gilles Petard/Redferns, Getty, EMP Museum Permanent Collection

≺ Isleys and Little Richard tours were extensive, but all these experiences were important in Jimi's development. He'd take any job, well-paying or not, and on every tour he learnt something, practising on the bus when he travelled and watching the other bands on the bill.

Despite his growing technical prowess, Hendrix was still viewed as little more than a hired hand. Solomon Burke claims he "traded" Hendrix on one tour to Otis Redding for two horn players, the way one might trade a baseball player. Jimi left Redding's band, Burke says, for the same reason Burke didn't want him any more: "Five dates would go beautifully," Burke said, "and then at the next show, he'd go into this wild stuff that wasn't part of the song. We ended up leaving him by the side of the road."

When Jimi was offered studio work in New York City, he moved north, but session jobs were hard to come by since he couldn't read music. He found a vibrant musical scene in Harlem that seemed light years away from the naive pleasure of the Spanish Castle. Clubs like Small's Paradise and the Palm Café further exposed him to jazz and a black intelligentsia. He entered the Wednesday-night amateur contest at the Apollo and came in first, winning $25 for his flashy guitar runs. It was, at least, some kind of vindication.

IN HARLEM, HENDRIX'S FRIENDS WERE PIMPS, HUSTLERS, prostitutes and drug dealers, some of whom were also musicians. While Jimi resisted several offers to become a drug dealer – opportunities declined so as not to interfere with his playing rather than out of moral concerns – for a spell he lived with, and was supported by, two drug hustlers. He also lived with at least two prostitutes.

During these turbulent and at times troubled early days in New York, Jimi began to learn how to approach studio work, first during a stint with The Isley Brothers and then with King Curtis. While he later sought and found session work backing up a number of different artists, including one strange episode where he backed actress Jayne Mansfield, the only true gem in his early studio discography was the riff he added to Don Covay's Mercy Mercy single, released in 1964.

In his desire to start a career as a recording artist in his own right, Jimi signed at least two record deals, one with Sue and the second with Ed Chalpin of PPX Records. This carefree attitude would later cost Hendrix dearly, but it also underlines the desperation that drove the guitarist in his bid to succeed.

A tour playing 58 shows in 60 days with Joey Dee And The Starliters in '64 represented Jimi's first tenure in an integrated band, and, since the band were riding high on the success of their Peppermint Twist single, it also taught him more about the white pop market. On the tour, the Starliters played to crowds as large as 10,000, the biggest Jimi had experienced by far. Despite the band's status and popularity, in certain states racial tensions caused by a mixed band were all too prevalent; the black musicians were sometimes advised not to leave the backstage area during the intermission.

Away from the initial integration he'd encountered in Seattle, race was a barrier that Hendrix ➢

Getty (2)

ROSEMART
RECORDS
Distributed by Atlantic Record Sales Co., Inc.
1841 B'way, N.Y.C.
45-801
RSM-7879
MERCY, MERCY
(Covay - Ott)
DON COVAY &
THE GOODTIMERS

"When B.B. King came in, you should have seen Jimi's eyes light up."

Wild boys: with Curtis Knight and the Squires in May 1966, shortly before he moved to the UK.

butted up against repeatedly. As an African-American he had to endure ‘whites only’ drinking fountains in the South, but he also struggled with colour lines within music, where he soon discovered the prejudices ran both ways. In Harlem he found that playing rock licks was strictly forbidden, while adding too much of a blues sound to his studio gigs was also out of the question if the recording was to appeal to a white audience.

In effect Hendrix’s own interest in music lay outside the accepted notions of the time. Jimi liked both rock’n’roll and R&B, but outside the Spanish Castle he had rarely seen the two genres mixed. He began to imagine himself as a solo artist, one who took the exciting showboating element of the chitlin’ circuit and brought it to a new audience by mixing elements of rock and folk music. By early 1966, however, Jimi found no demand for his unique vision within either the black community or from the white audience. Then, in the spring of that year, he had an artistic epiphany of sorts when he listened to Bob Dylan’s *Blonde On Blonde* while taking his first hit of acid. He wrote a letter to his father around this time that explained the key role Dylan played as an inspiration. “Now days, people don’t want you to sing good,” Jimi wrote. “They want you to sing sloppy and have a good beat to your song. So that’s what angle I’m going to shoot at. That’s where the money is.”

> “He had an epiphany when he listened to Dylan while on acid.”

During May 1966, Jimi met Richie Havens, who suggested that Hendrix try his luck in Greenwich Village where audiences were more open-minded. That month Jimi also found a saviour of sorts in Linda Keith, who was Keith Richards’ girlfriend and found it inconceivable that a guitar player of Hendrix’s talent didn’t have a record deal. “He had these amazing hands,” Linda Keith recalls. “I found myself simply mesmerised by watching him play.” She set out to find him a record deal almost exactly at the moment he struck out in the Village as a band leader of a group he called Jimmy James And The Blue Flames.

His initial forays at clubs like the Café Wha? consisted mostly of cover songs that he had bent into his blues/rock amalgamation he thought might fly. “Jimi didn’t really have much ‘Jimi Hendrix music’ at the time,” observed his friend Tunde-Ra Aleem. “He ended up playing covers, but he would make them his songs.” Though some observers remember him performing early versions of Foxy Lady and Third Stone From The Sun, most of the show was Jimi covering Howlin’ Wolf’s Killing Floor, or Dylan’s Like A Rolling Stone, or The Troggs’ Wild Thing. The one song he most attached himself to, however, was a cover of Hey Joe. Becoming his signature tune, the track allowed Jimi to showcase his extraordinary guitar skills while demonstrating his command of the stage by playing between his legs, behind his back and with his teeth. He had honed all these tricks on the chitlin’ circuit, but played to an audience of white kids in the Village they had a fresh exoticism. While he was only making $10 a night – and was surviving once again by living with girlfriends who fed and clothed him – his reputation was starting to spread through the Village and beyond.

Linda Keith went to two famous record men, Seymour Stein (who’d just formed Sire Records) and Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham, but neither was interested.

“The part of me that did like the music could see that he was trouble,” Oldham recalled, “and I had enough trouble already with the Stones.” She then ran into Chas Chandler, the bass player of The Animals, on the street in New York. Chandler was looking to leave his band and set himself up as a producer. He agreed to accompany Keith to the Village to see Hendrix. They stopped in for an afternoon performance and when Chandler witnessed Hendrix break into his show-stopping Hey Joe, he spilt a milkshake on himself he was so overwhelmed.

“I thought immediately he was the best guitarist I’d ever seen,” Chandler recalled in A Film About Jimi Hendrix. Chandler signed Jimi on the spot.

In the 12 months that followed, Hendrix saw the British rock scene fall under his spell; the likes of The Who, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck welcomed him with a mixture of awe and envy. Like many in Britain who would quickly pronounce Jimi a star, Chandler had never seen a true black revue before and didn’t know the chitlin’ origins of many of Hendrix’s moves and methods. In fairness, however, Jimi was no longer a novice – he was now a seasoned and gifted player with a style that had become his own. He’d dreamt he’d be famous by 22 and now, just a year or so behind schedule, he was ready.

On September 23, 1966, he took a Pan Am flight for Heathrow checking in with a small bag that held a change of clothes, pink plastic hair curlers and a jar of Valderma acne cream. Yet the only luggage that really mattered was his guitar. Jimi carried it on board the plane himself.

Charles R. Cross is the author of Room Full Of Mirrors: A Biography Of Jimi Hendrix, published by Sceptre. Special thanks to Randy Albright (randyalbright.com) and Niko Baver (earlyhendrix.com).

LFI/Photoshot

JIMI’S PLAYLIST

While Jimi’s roots lie in blues, soul and rock’n’roll, he listened to a wide range of music until the very end. Here are 10 albums found in the collection discovered in his apartment after his death.

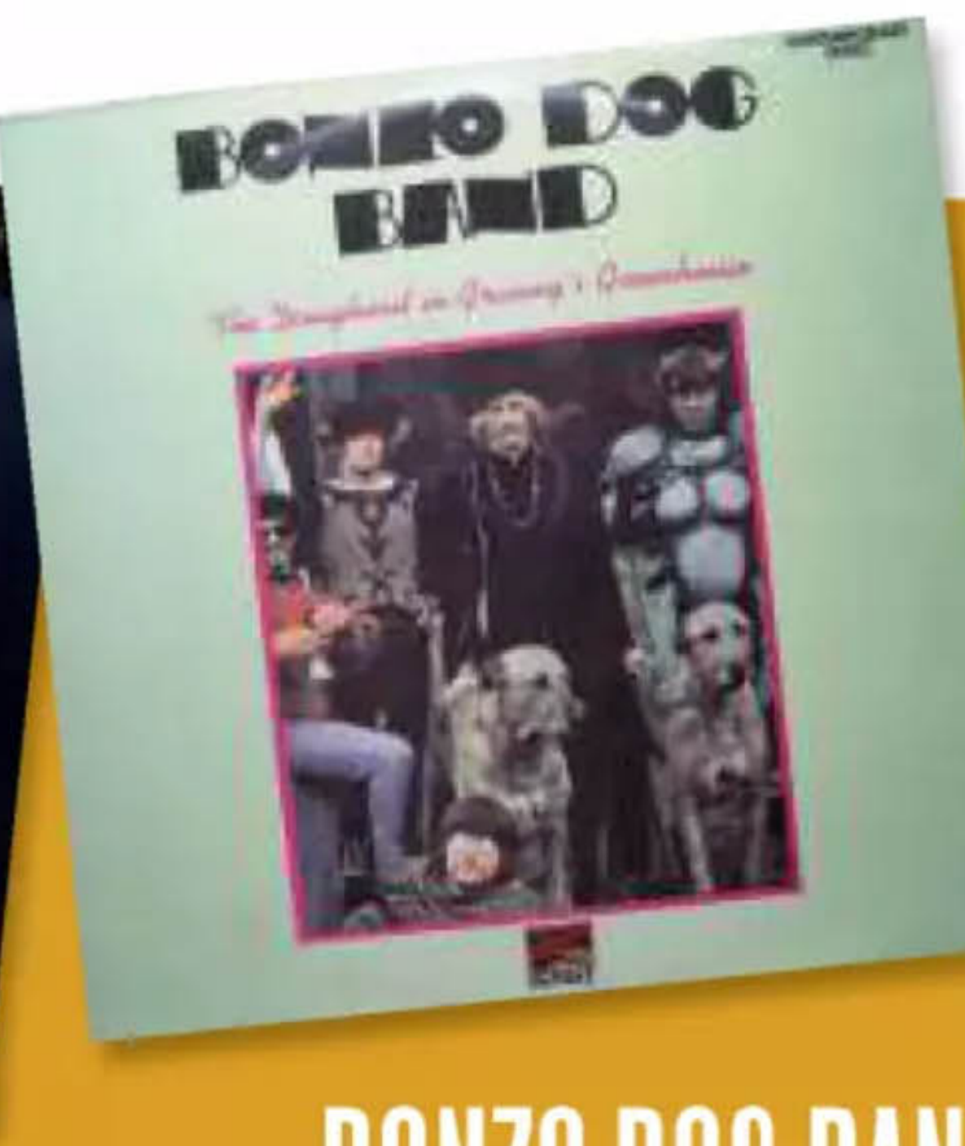
da capo
Love

LOVE

Da Capo

(Elektra, 1967)

Jimi played briefly with Love leader Arthur Lee in the mid ’60s, and kept a keen interest in his former collaborator’s musical trajectory. This second album by the LA psych-punks is typified by the street-tough track 7 And 7 Is.

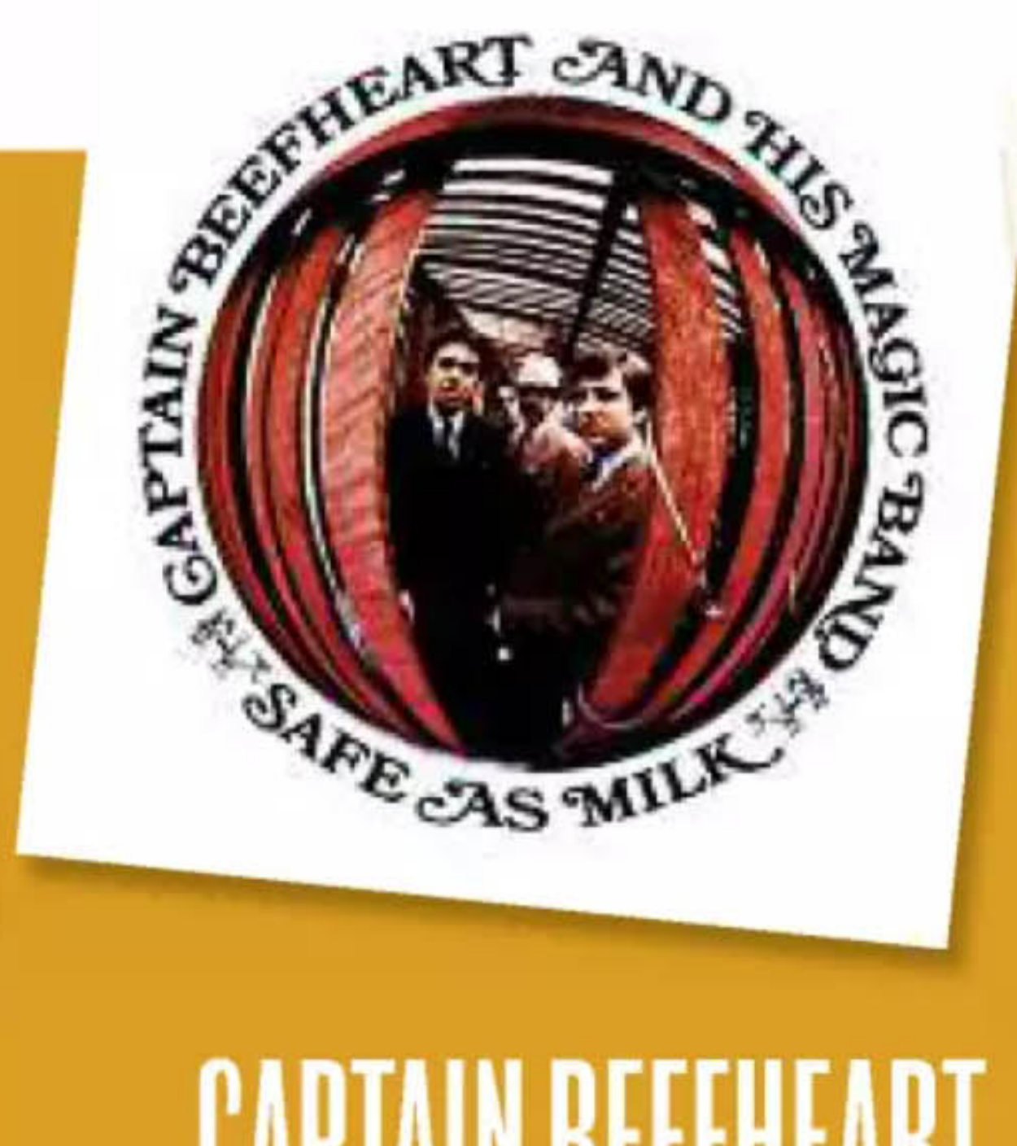


BONZO DOG BAND

The Doughnut In Granny’s Greenhouse

(Liberty, 1968)

Hendrix owned a UK pressing of the Bonzo’s second album. Stand-outs here include My Pink Half Of The Drainpipe and the proto-rap of Humanoid Boogie.



CAPTAIN BEEFHEART

Safe As Milk

(Buddah, 1967)

Soul, blues, jazz and garage punk – four of Hendrix’s prime influences – were amply evident on Beefheart’s debut. Young Ry Cooder’s guitar on tracks like Call On Me and Plastic Factory provided added appeal for Jimi.

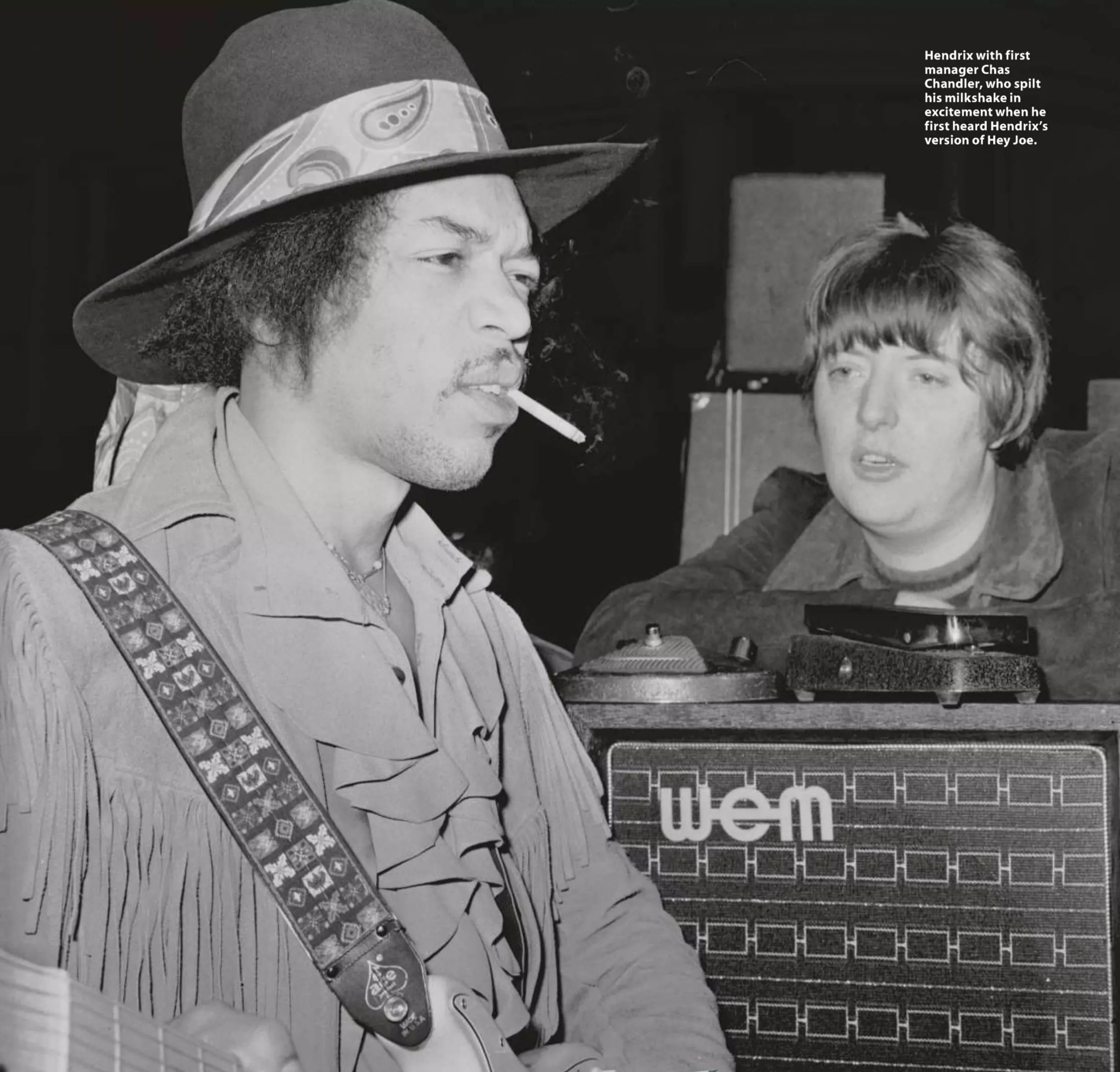
you're a big boy now
the lovin' spoonful

LOVIN’ SPOONFUL

You’re A Big Boy Now

(Karma Sutra, 1967)

Soundtrack to Francis Ford Coppola’s first film; John Sebastian’s bliss-pop pioneers reach into the realm of orchestration but keep a commercial edge, hence the Top 20 hit Darling, Be Home Soon.



Hendrix with first manager Chas Chandler, who spilt his milkshake in excitement when he first heard Hendrix's version of Hey Joe.

HOLST
THE PLANETS
SIR ADRIAN BOULT

GUSTAV HOLST

The Planets

(EMI, 1967)

Conductor Adrian Boult's version of The Planets with the New Philharmonia was nominated for a Grammy in '67. The weighty melodrama of the eight-part suite clearly found favour with stargazer Jimi.

BOOKENDS/SIMON & GARFUNKEL

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

Bookends

(CBS, 1968)

Released shortly after the Graduate soundtrack, *Bookends* has a semi-conceptual first side, tracing the journey from youth to old age and including America, and a second with hits such as Hazy Shade Of Winter and Mrs Robinson.

THE ROLLING STONES

Their Satanic Majesties Request

(London, 1967)

Mick and Keith's psychedelic set boasts 2000 Man and 2000 Light Years – some serious space trucking that echo Jimi's intergalactic studio trips.

THE BEATLES

Abbey Road

(Apple, 1969)

A keen Beatles fan, Jimi famously covered *Sgt Pepper's* title track live without ever rehearsing it. In turn, the Fabs made decidedly heavier music following Hendrix's meteoric rise as evinced on this final bow.

BOB DYLAN

Blonde On Blonde

(CBS, 1966)

A rabid Dylan-ite, Hendrix would work with session man extraordinaire Al Kooper on his 1968 triumph *Electric Ladyland*. Chances are that Jimi's admiration for Al's work on this double set and *Highway 61 Revisited* were key.

JOHNNY CASH
AT FOLSOM PRISON

JOHNNY CASH

At Folsom Prison

(CBS, 1968)

Recorded in front of 2,000 inmates, Cash's 1968 live LP has an edgy spontaneity that Jimi appreciated. Carl Perkins' presence on guitar is likely to have been another factor in Jimi's fondness for this set.

BLESS MY SOUL

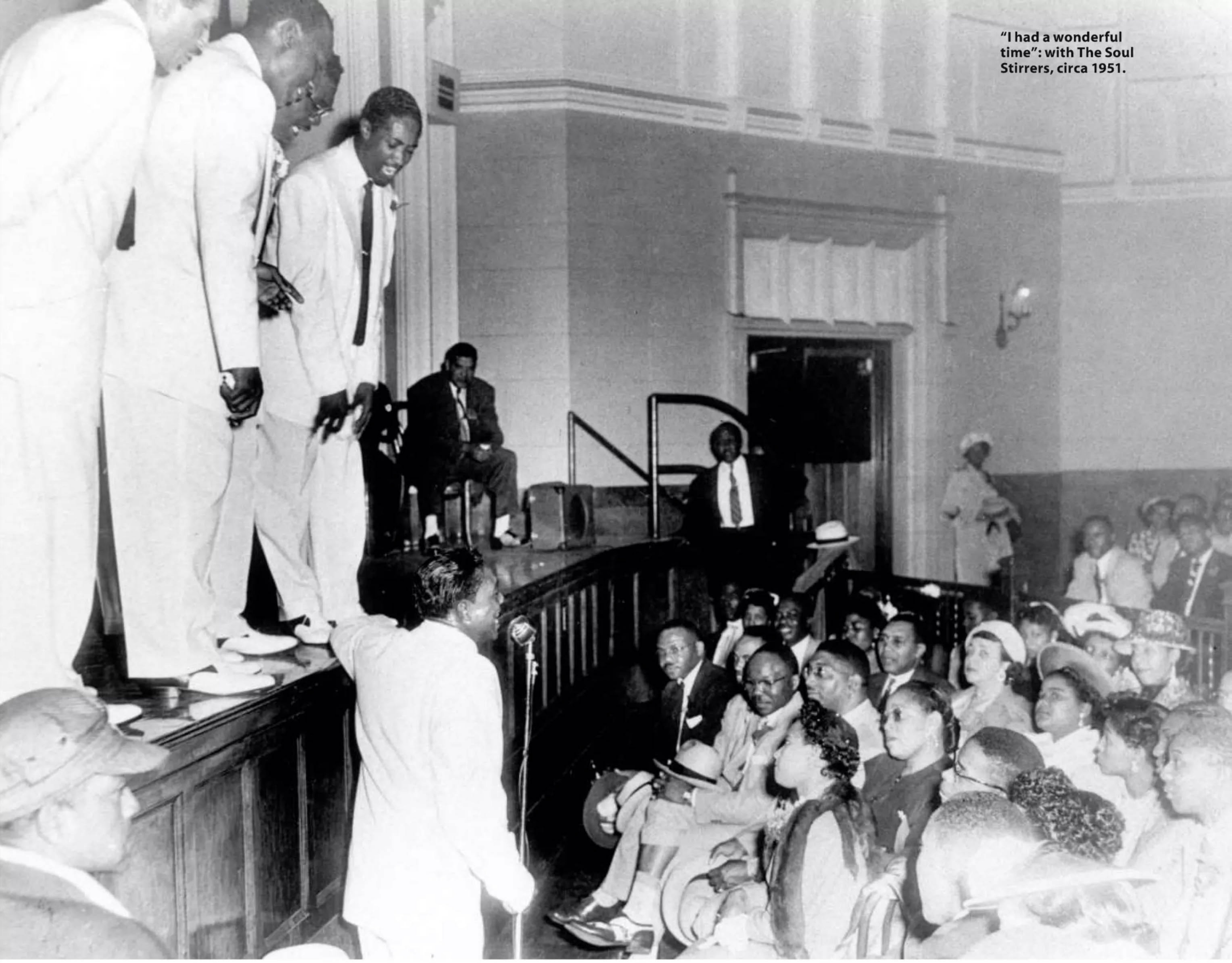
He was "the best singer who ever lived, no contest", but **Sam Cooke** also struggled – against the music industry, against segregation and with his own identity in tumultuous 1960s America. In the end, tragedy and violence cut short a beautiful life.

By **Barney Hoskyns**.

FOR THE BEST part of 15 years, Sam Cooke was an archangel, an American hero. Jerry Wexler called him "the best singer who ever lived, no contest". He was the first teen idol the gospel field produced, and he was instrumental in laying the foundation for the gospel-rooted style of R&B that became soul music. At least a part of the tragedy of Cooke's death in 1964, when he was 33, is that he never got to make the music he should have made: caught in the limbo period between '50s R&B and '60s soul, he felt constantly obliged to tailor his music to the white pop market.

"When I listen to him, I still can't believe the things he did," said Wexler, who wanted to sign Cooke to Atlantic Records. "It's always fresh and amazing to me. He had control, he could play with his voice like an instrument, his melisma… I mean, nobody else could do it. Everything about him was perfection." ➢

Puttin' trouble on the run: in New York City, 1958.



"I had a wonderful time": with The Soul Stirrers, circa 1951.

< Perfection is certainly what you hear when you listen to Jesus Wash Away My Troubles or Pilgrim Of Sorrow, or Bring It On Home To Me or A Change Is Gonna Come – two masterpieces from his gospel period and two soul classics from the first half of the '60s. No one has ever quite sung with the verve and panache of Sam Cooke, a man conveying all, as Peter Guralnick wrote, "with a flick of the eyebrow, the tiniest modulation of tone". Probably no one ever will.

BORN IN THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES HOTSPOT of Clarksdale in 1931, Sam Cooke grew up as the fourth child of Charles and Annie May Cook (Sam added the 'e' years later). Charles Cook worked as a houseboy in a 19th-century mansion belonging to a rich white family, and as a preacher to local Baptist congregations. Both the Reverend and Sam's brother L.C. remembered Sam singing to a bunch of sticks stuck in the ground under an old pecan tree in their backyard; he would explain that he was practising for his future audiences.

When the Depression took his job, Charles Cook joined the procession of black men heading north to the stockyards of Chicago. His family soon followed and they settled in Bronzeville, where Charles was already an assistant pastor. In 1939 his offspring formed their own gospel group, The Singing Children, with Sam harmonising in a fledgling tenor voice behind his teenage siblings Charles and Mary. The thriving gospel scene in Chicago – home to Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson and The Soul Stirrers – was a contagious one.

When the Singing Children stopped singing, Sam fell in with a local streetcorner gospel quartet and became their second lead. Singing with a quartet, you had your cake and ate it too; anyone who'd seen outfits like the Stirrers on the gospel circuit knew how they juggled God-fearing zeal with snappy dressing and ladykiller appeal. Sam's group called themselves The Teenage Highway QCs.

It was always clear that Sam was ambitious – ambitious enough to ask Soul Stirrer R.B. Robinson to become his group's musical trainer. Nobody could touch the Stirrers for sheer polyrhythmic brilliance, but Sam learned fast and made sure the others kept up. The group's reputation had more than a little to do with the female admirers Sam attracted to their shows. (And not merely attracting: he did 90 days in Cook County Jail for supposedly corrupting a 16-year-old girl with some rather primitive pornography.)

In 1948, the Highway QCs found themselves a manager, attracted the attention of Aretha Franklin's preacher father, the Reverend C.L. in Detroit, and fetched up in Memphis where Sam began writing songs, learning about composition from Herbert Brewster (composer of Surely God Is Able, Move On Up A Little Higher and other gospel classics). But the group's manager couldn't get them a deal and they were making peanuts on the local circuit. When The Soul Stirrers approached Sam in 1950 to ask if he'd be interested in taking over from their departing leader R.H. Harris (who was quitting because "the moral aspects" of gospel were "just falling out of the water"), the 20 year old jumped at the chance.

"Sam did it in a different way," said S. Roy Crain, the Soul Stirrer who effectively doubled as the group's manager. "He didn't want to be that deep, *pitiful* singer."

That observation neatly encapsulates just what made the rookie Cooke stand out from the ecstatic gospel screamers on the circuit – men like Archie Brownlee of The Five Blind Boys Of Mississippi, Kylo

Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images (2, and previous page)

"IN THOSE DAYS, EVERYBODY WHO SANG GOSPEL BELIEVED THAT IF YOU SWITCHED OVER TO POPULAR MUSIC, SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU."

Turner of The Pilgrim Travelers, and The Soul Stirrers' own Paul Foster. Sam may have been slim and boyish – "that pretty child", people called him – but he brought a new grace to the business of testifying, and it made some of the vein-popping veterans look *passé*.

Sam's first few years on the road with the Stirrers were relentless. Ten months of the year were spent travelling the gospel highway, usually with all five Stirrers wedged into one car and surviving on bread and bologna. But as people began to accept the successor to righteous "old man Harris", the touring began to pay off. "I had a wonderful time, a wonderful life," Sam recalled later. "I was doing the thing I liked best and getting paid for it."

Sam's first recordings with The Soul Stirrers – for Art Rupe's LA label Specialty – are the only time he ever sounded remotely insecure. On Peace In The Valley, cut in March 1951, the thin voice squeaks and cracks, its thunder stolen by the barking baritone of Paul Foster. Far more assured are Jesus Gave Me Water and the self-composed Until Jesus Calls Me Home. Art Rupe thought Sam more mellifluous and controlled than R.H. Harris; his light, suave touch was the perfect counterpoint to the rough country harmonies of the Stirrers.

Specialty
2:39
PEACE IN THE VALLEY
THE SOUL STIRRERS
SP 802 A
be
a
fence
around
me
SOUL STIRRERS

He's got the sweetest little baby face: bottom left, with The Soul Stirrers.

By the following year Sam was starting to develop the famous "woah-ooh-oh-oh" yodel that became his falsetto trademark: the Rev Sammy Lewis called these embellishments "curlicues". He came into his own on the Thomas Dorsey song Someday, Somewhere, taking risks and throwing up superb cries. In 1953, the brisk, uptempo Come And Go To That Land found him in total command. "Of course Sam did his best work in gospel," chided gospel matriarch Dorothy Love Coates. "How you gonna take somebody who loves what he's doing and turn him around and put him in something unfamiliar and he's gonna be as free and natural as he was at home?"

But the best was saved for last, on the Specialty sessions Sam recorded with the Stirrers early in 1956: masterpieces such as Jesus Wash Away My Troubles, Touch The Hem Of His Garment, the poppy Wonderful and the harrowing Pilgrim Of Sorrow. His airy grace and jewel-like precision on these songs remain unsurpassed in gospel or soul. And Were You There?, his very last gospel side, sounds like a final, desperate testimony from someone who knew he was going over to the other side for good. "Were you there when they pierced him in the side?" Sam all but shrieks, for once sounding closer to Archie Brownlee than to R.H. Harris.

That Sam Cooke knew he was about to 'cross over' to the land of pop godlessness is pretty clear. Urging him on was the very man Art Rupe had hired as Specialty's A&R man: ex-bandleader Robert 'Bumps' Blackwell, who'd produced the label's current Little Richard hits.

"Bumps said I had the voice, the confidence and the equipment to work as a single [sic] and that I ought to give it a try," Sam remembered. "Making a living was good enough, but what's wrong with doing better than that?"

Bumps had seen Sam's sex appeal up close during a big Soul Stirrers show at LA's Shrine Auditorium. "My initial impression was, This cat should be pop," he recalled. He thought it was ludicrous that a gospel singer could have two illegitimate children – as Cooke did by now – and yet not record a pop song without incurring the opprobrium of the gospel community. As Bobby Womack recalled, "In those days everybody who sang gospel believed that if you switched over to popular music, something bad would happen to you."

IN JUNE 1956, SAM wrote to Art Rupe saying he wanted to record some "popular ballads" for "one of the major recording companies". Rupe understandably lacked enthusiasm for this plan: apart from any business considerations, he genuinely loved gospel music and wanted no part of any attempt at a pop crossover. But he finally OK'd a pop session that winter, in the New Orleans studio where Bumps had recorded Little Richard. Released under the name Dale Cook, Lovable was a straight secularisation of Wonderful; it made for a terrible pop record and everyone knew it.

Meanwhile S.R. Crain and J.J. Farley of the Stirrers were concerned about the potential damage 'Dale Cook' – who was transparently Sam – could do to the group. They cabled Art Rupe begging him not to issue any more pop sides for Sam. The upshot was that Sam stopped paying attention to Crain, who'd been his guiding force for five years, and turned instead to J.W. Alexander, who had less of a problem with crossing the great gospel-pop divide and who was already helping to scout pop acts for Bumps. "It seemed like there was a void at that time," J.W. recalled. "There was one boy, Sonny Til with The Orioles, who'd been very big with young black girls. In Sam, though, I saw even more potential – he was more handsome."

In April 1957, Sam sent Bumps six songs on tape, featuring just him and his guitar; among them were I'll Come Running Back To You, I Don't Want To Cry ➢

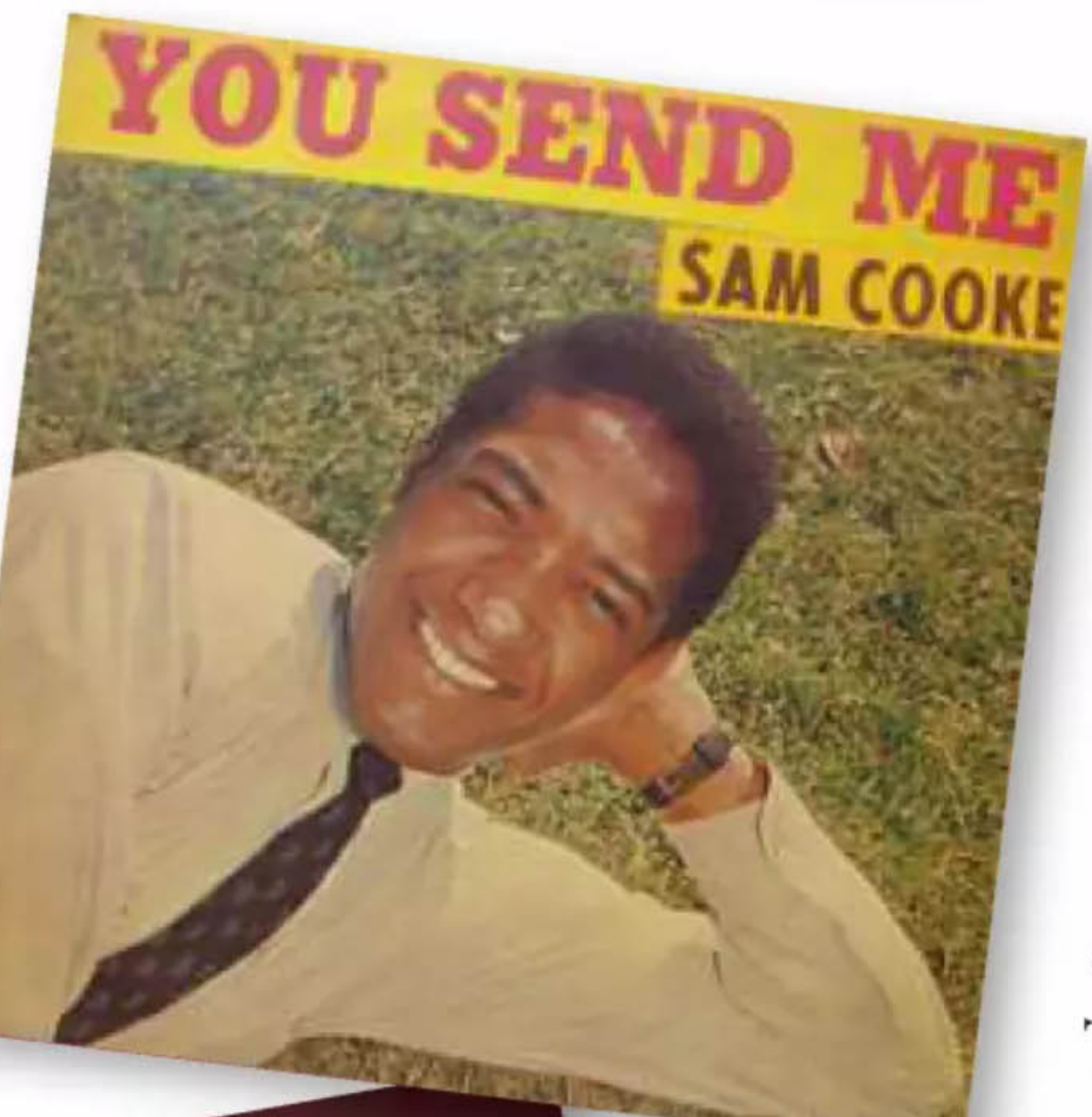
The Italian Job: getting downcast with Hugo Peretti and Luigi Creatore.

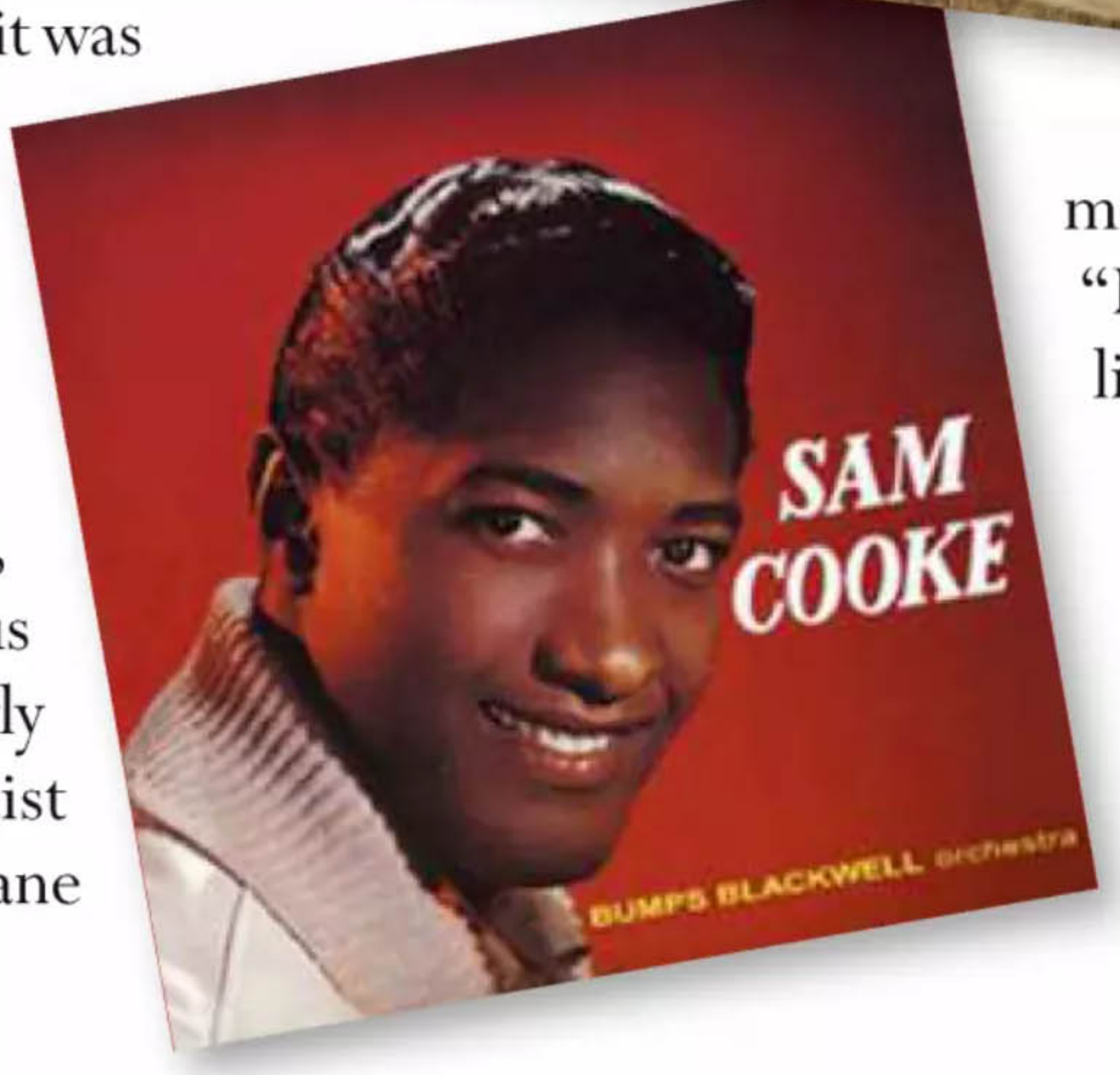
"MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALISE HOW BAD THOSE SONGS ARE. THAT'S A TRIBUTE TO HIS GENIUS."

< and a little throwaway thing called You Send Me. Bumps decided to concentrate on a pop arrangement of Gershwin's Summertime – he seemed to be aiming at housewives as much as teenagers. With arranger Rene Hall doubling as a rhythm guitarist, the recently arrived New Orleans sessionman Earl Palmer on drums and a white vocal group by the name of The Pied Pipers, he and Sam went into the studio.

When he heard what they were doing, Art Rupe turned puce with rage. "Bumps Blackwell and myself were running an arrangement through on Summertime and Art just exploded," said Rene Hall. "He said, 'Who the hell is going to buy Gershwin and opera and all that stuff?!'" Porgy And Bess was so far removed from what he believed Specialty was about that he wanted to kill Bumps. What he actually did was fire him on the spot. As legend has it, he then turned to a gormless-looking gofer and told him he'd just got Bumps's job. That gofer was Salvatore 'Sonny' Bono.

Amazingly, the session continued, perhaps because no one was altogether sure if Rupe was serious. Nobody thought You Send Me was anything other than a piece of fluff, although it was hard to deny the simple beauty of Sam's phrasing – trademark yodel and all – against the blanched cooing of The Pied Pipers. On June 17, 1957, Bumps Blackwell walked out of Art Rupe's office with the masters of Summertime and You Send Me under his arm and a cheque for $1,500 in his pocket, having waived all future royalties from his previous Specialty productions. He went directly to the newly formed Keen label, jointly owned by jazz clarinettist Bob Keane and Greek businessman John Siamas. Keane and Siamas promptly hired him as their A&R man. Sam spent the summer living in Bumps Blackwell's apartment while Bumps searched in vain for material that might suit him. Finally, in desperation, Bumps pulled his Specialty masters out of the cupboard and played them for his new employers. Keane and Siamas flipped out when they heard Summertime and You Send Me, and insisted on releasing them. By September it was clear that You Send Me was the side everyone wanted to hear.





The record wound up selling 80,000 copies in Los Angeles alone. Sam sang it with a creamy, dreamy wistfulness that registered instantly with millions of American teenagers, and it soared to Number 1 – despite the predictable threat of a white cover by Teresa Brewer. The hook was irresistible. "Sam would say, 'Keep going back to the same thing and repeat it… you get a melody and stick to it,'" recalled Bobby Womack. "He'd say, 'That's why my songs hit, 'cos people like to sing along.'"

Overnight, Sam Cooke was a superstar. With his first solo release he was all over American radio and prominent on TV shows such as American Bandstand. When the entertainment machine went into overdrive, a white agent at William Morris convinced Sam that he could

Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images, Silver Screen Collection/Getty Images

"move him into the non-black market". Meanwhile, Art Rupe rushed out I'll Come Running Back To You in an attempt to cash in on his departed star's glory.

Sam Cooke did "move into the non-black market", but with mixed results. Convinced that career longevity was contingent on breaking into the Harry Belafonte/Johnny Mathis/Sammy Davis Jr supper-club league, he not only packed his first Keen album with glutinous ballads and syrupy show tunes, but – long before he was ready for such a thing – allowed William Morris to set up an engagement at New York's legendary Copacabana club in the spring of 1958. Singing to the fans of stand-up comic Myron Cohen, the boy stiffed. "He doesn't seem ready for the more savvy Copa clientele," adjudged the reviewer for Variety.

IT IS CURIOUS TO REFLECT THAT COOKE WAS bidding for the approval of white America at a time when black entertainers were having to deal with segregation. When he joined a 'Biggest Show Of Stars' package tour in April 1958 – headlining over Clyde McPhatter, LaVern Baker, The Everly Brothers, Paul Anka and Jackie Wilson – some Southern shows were played to segregated audiences, and R&B stars including McPhatter were saying it was time to stop sitting on the fence. The following year, Sam demanded integrated seating at a venue in Norfolk, Virginia, and got it.

When the tour finished, Sam returned to LA to record more tracks for Keen. One of the people close to him that summer was Lou Adler, a future kingpin of the LA rock scene through his masterminding of The Mamas And The Papas and the Monterey Pop Festival. With his partner Herb Alpert, Adler had parlayed his way into a songwriting/scouting/producing job with Keen, and quickly hit it off with the label's only star.

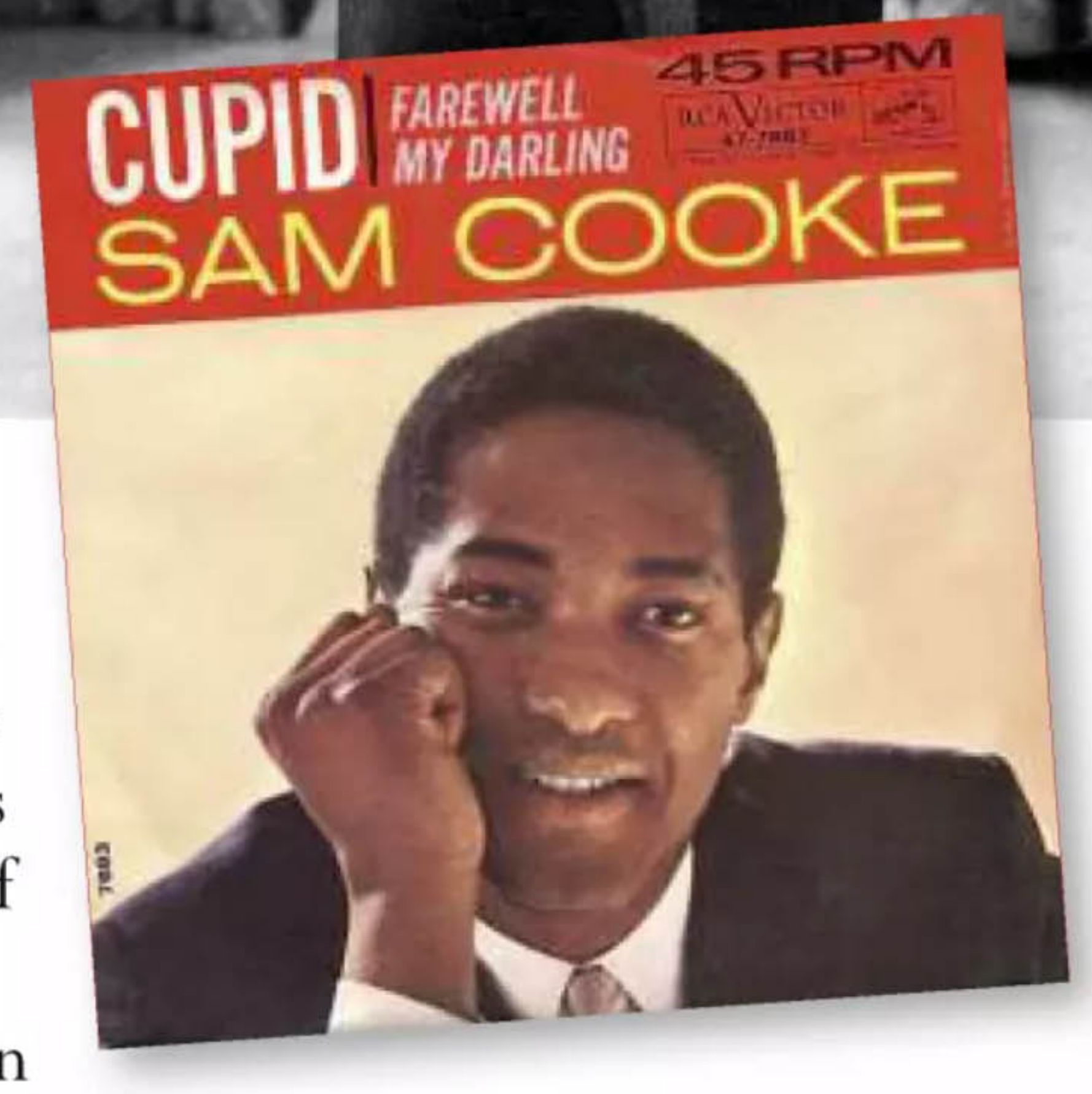
"Sam taught me how to communicate with musicians when you're not a musician yourself," said Adler. "He gave me a body language for working in the studio. He also introduced me to a black world in Los Angeles, because I roomed with him for about eight months. I learned more about the music and the people than I'd ever known, and I never experienced one bit of racial intolerance. People just took me in because I was with Sam."

It was with Adler that Sam Cooke talked of navigating the fine line between kowtowing to his white audience and remaining loyal to his black fan base: between the glitter and the chitlin', as Cooke's biographer Daniel Wolff neatly puts it. He told Lou that he would always be able to "go back to my people", and the two men tried to write songs that synthesised pop style with gospel feel in the way Little Willie John's records did. Yet it says everything about the split within Sam that his second Keen album was aimed squarely at what Adler's linernote conceded was "the after-dinner circuit". Listen to *Encore* for his decidedly iffy readings of Accentuate The Positive and Along The Navajo Trail…

The fact is, Sam Cooke never did abandon his black fan base. However banal the songs he was recording – and writing, on occasion – that majestic voice always spoke to black America, its every modulation transmuting the triteness of the material into palpable emotional release. "When Sam came in with a loose-leaf folder of lyrics, you didn't really get a tremendous feeling from the words on the page," recalled Herb Alpert. "But when you asked him to pick up the guitar and play the song, it turned into a magical experience. I'd look over his shoulder and say, Is that the same song you just showed me?" Solomon Burke remarked that "new pop audiences heard that yodel like it was a shiny new thing, but if you knew Sam from gospel it was him saying, 'Hey, it's me.'"

By the spring of 1959, Sam was married to Barbara Campbell, whom he'd known from his childhood and who'd already borne him their first child, Linda. (It was only a year before that he'd faced a paternity suit and paid $10,000 out of court to Connie Bolling.) He was tiring of Keen Records and Bumps Blackwell, wanting bigger firepower behind his career. Ever since the farce of his Copa debut, he'd been talking to Adler about major label deals and bigshot managers. In due course, white manager Jess Rand assumed control of his career.

Rock steady croon: swoonsome on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1957.



Rumours began circulating in November 1959 of a bidding war for Sam Cooke's signature between Capitol, Atlantic and RCA-Victor. Capitol had Nat King Cole, but RCA had Harry Belafonte and Elvis Presley. Indeed, RCA were already attempting to effect a major pop crossover with local LA hero Jesse Belvin, also an ex-Specialty artist. As for Atlantic, it's tempting to speculate as to what might have happened had Sam plumped for the label that was most solidly anchored in R&B. Unfortunately, they ruled themselves out by stipulating that publishing rights had to be part of the deal.

BUT, GOD! IF ONLY HE'D SIGNED WITH Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler at Atlantic and spared the world the saccharine, string-saturated atrocities he recorded with RCA's hotshot duo Hugo Peretti and Luigi Creatore – the Italian cousins who produced Dance With Me Henry, Georgia Gibbs's soulless bowdlerising of Etta James's lubricious classic The Wallflower. "Most people don't realise how bad those records are," Wexler said years later. "That he overrode a lot of the sterility in them is a tribute to his genius."

A first session at RCA's New York studio in late January 1960 saw an initial attempt at the drecky Teenage Sonata, Sam's first single for the label. Fortunately, it also saw the recording of the vastly superior Chain Gang, based on an experience Sam had while driving through Georgia on tour. There was a certain disjunct between the grimness of the theme and the jauntiness of the song's arrangement, but it was a terrific pop record anyway. RCA, showing their lack in judgement, shelved the record for seven months and issued Teenage Sonata and the even less successful You Understand Me instead. Meanwhile Sam cut *Cooke's Tour*, an album of songs about travel: Galway Bay, Bali H'ai, Jamaica Farewell and other soul-free ditties. That didn't do too well either.

Ironically, it was Keen Records who put Sam back on the pop map by digging out an old Adler/Alpert song called Wonderful World, cut virtually as a demo a year earlier. With its references ➢

≺ to history and trigonometry, the song was an instant teen classic and climbed to Number 12 on the pop chart. When RCA finally got around to issuing Chain Gang it did even better, making Number 2 on both pop and R&B charts.

Thanks to Wonderful World and Chain Gang, Sam Cooke finished 1960 as a pop monarch. In his open-neck shirts, cardigans and checked pants, he was already the epitome of casual sophistication. "If you look at Belafonte and Cooke and Marvin Gaye, they all look alike," said Kim Fowley, who met Cooke several times in the nascent days of the LA pop industry. "They all have a Grecian quality to their bone structure. Sam had white features and Italian suits and he drove around in a green E-type Jaguar. Sam was the black Elvis, but in pop terms he wasn't really a black artist."

And yet Sam Cooke was becoming more and more conscious of his status as a black icon. It is significant, for example, that in late 1959 he stopped processing his hair and let it grow naturally. In a syndicated piece for black papers in the summer of 1960 he wrote about civil rights and said he "detested people… who've lacked the courage to stand up and be counted". Increasingly, like his friend Cassius Clay (soon to become Muhammad Ali), he was prepared to be counted alongside his more courageous colleagues.

Increasingly, too, Sam was thinking about black self-sufficiency, black capitalism; like Berry Gordy in Detroit, he wanted to start his own label with a stable of artists he could groom and develop. "Control was important to Sam," said Hugo Peretti. "He saw what had happened to a lot of other black artists and he didn't want to get ten-percented to death." When J.W. Alexander told him he'd started a publishing company called KAGS Music, Sam proposed a partnership. By the end of 1960, the two men had established a small complex of companies in a tiny office on Hollywood Boulevard, with SAR Records as its centrepiece.

After releasing the surprisingly bluesy Sad Mood, in December 1960, Sam played a stint at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Also on the bill was a young Aretha Franklin, whose passage from the gospel highway to ritzy pop arrangements of Broadway show-stoppers roughly paralleled the journey Sam had made. She had met Sam when she was a kid in Detroit and had always been sweet on him – some have speculated that she and Sam had "a thing" going on. "Ooooh, I loved him," she remembered. "That man could mess up a whole room full of women!"

"Sam was mesmerising," said Lou Adler. "He was five ten, but he seemed to have a larger stature because he was so slim. When he was on stage women had to hold back the way they felt in order not to anger the men they sat with." Certainly, not all the women who came to Sam's shows held back: he was already used to being showered with panties. For his new agent Jerry Brandt, though, Sam Cooke had "sex appeal that women loved and men didn't resent".

"OOOOH I LOVED HIM!" ARETHA REMEMBERED. "THAT MAN COULD MESS UP A WHOLE ROOM FULL OF WOMEN!"

ALTHOUGH HE'D turned 30, Sam continued to keep pace with teen trends. 1962 saw two classic dance-party records in Having A Party and Twistin' The Nite Away, but it was telling that his twist album also contained Soothe Me and Somebody Have Mercy, soulful performances which showed he was in tune with the new sanctified R&B of James Brown and Bobby 'Blue' Bland. The flipside of Having A Party, moreover, was the magnificent Bring It On Home To Me, perhaps the most convincing of all the arguments for Sam's soul credentials. Free of the baroque embellishments of Hugo and Luigi's arranger Horace Ott, and featuring a marvellous harmony vocal by fellow gospel graduate Lou Rawls, Bring It On Home To Me was pure ➢

Brotherly shove: Muhammad Ali recorded a very sweet track, Hey Hey The Gang's All Here, with Cooke in March 1964.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Give it up: in the studio with Bumps Blackwell.

FRIENDS NOTICED THAT SAM DRANK MORE AND LAUGHED LESS AS THE MONTHS WENT BY.

undiluted church. Late that summer, he cut the equally impassioned Nothing Can Change This Love. SAR, meanwhile, continued to provide an outlet for his rootsier musical tendencies.

These tendencies were even more pronounced in 1963, when Sam persuaded RCA to record one of his sporadic chitlin'-circuit shows at a club in the black ghetto of North Miami. Unreleased for two decades, *Live At The Harlem Square Club* was a posthumous vindication of Sam as Soul Godfather. With Sam in rawly abrasive voice and sax god King Curtis in the band, it is a thrilling counterpoint to the schmaltzy live album he recorded on his return to the Copacabana the following year. It may not be *Live At The Apollo* – the unbelievably funky album James Brown cut during a week when Sam himself was in the audience – but it's full of sweat-soaked swagger and boisterous exhortation.

Sam insisted that his next album, *Night Beat*, be cut in LA with his old Specialty/Keen arranger Rene Hall. "There was all this frustration that Rene wasn't as involved in the RCA records as he'd been in the Keen records," said Kim Fowley. "Sam was probably hustled in the way they hustled you in the early '60s, which was to say: if you stay in LA, perceived by New Yorkers as a second-class music city, you'll be a piece of shit forever." The bluesy sound of Little Red Rooster, Lost And Lookin' and Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen mark *Night Beat* as one of Sam's most satisfying albums at RCA.

IN SPRING 1963, ALLEN KLEIN entered the Sam Cooke story. Klein was a New York accountant who'd made music business history by auditing Atlantic Records and enabling Bobby Darin to quit the label and sign with Capitol. Klein later claimed that Cooke was heavily in debt due to mismanagement when they first met – a claim disputed by Jess Rand but backed up by Jerry Brandt at William Morris. By September 1963, Klein had audited RCA's books, found $150,000 in unpaid royalties, and renegotiated Sam's RCA contract to the tune of $450,000 spread over four years. He also won control of Sam's songs and recordings by setting up an independent company called Tracey Limited, a similar wheeze to the one he'd later use to address the financial affairs of The Rolling Stones and The Beatles.

Sam Cooke changed during the course of 1963, not least because of the drowning of his infant son Vincent in the pool of a new home purchased in the Los Feliz Hills. Vincent's death not only rocked Sam's religious faith to its foundations, it severely tested his marriage to Barbara, whose lack of vigilance he blamed for the tragedy. Friends noticed that he drank more and laughed less as the months went by. It's also likely that he began running around with other women in a more compulsive way than ever.

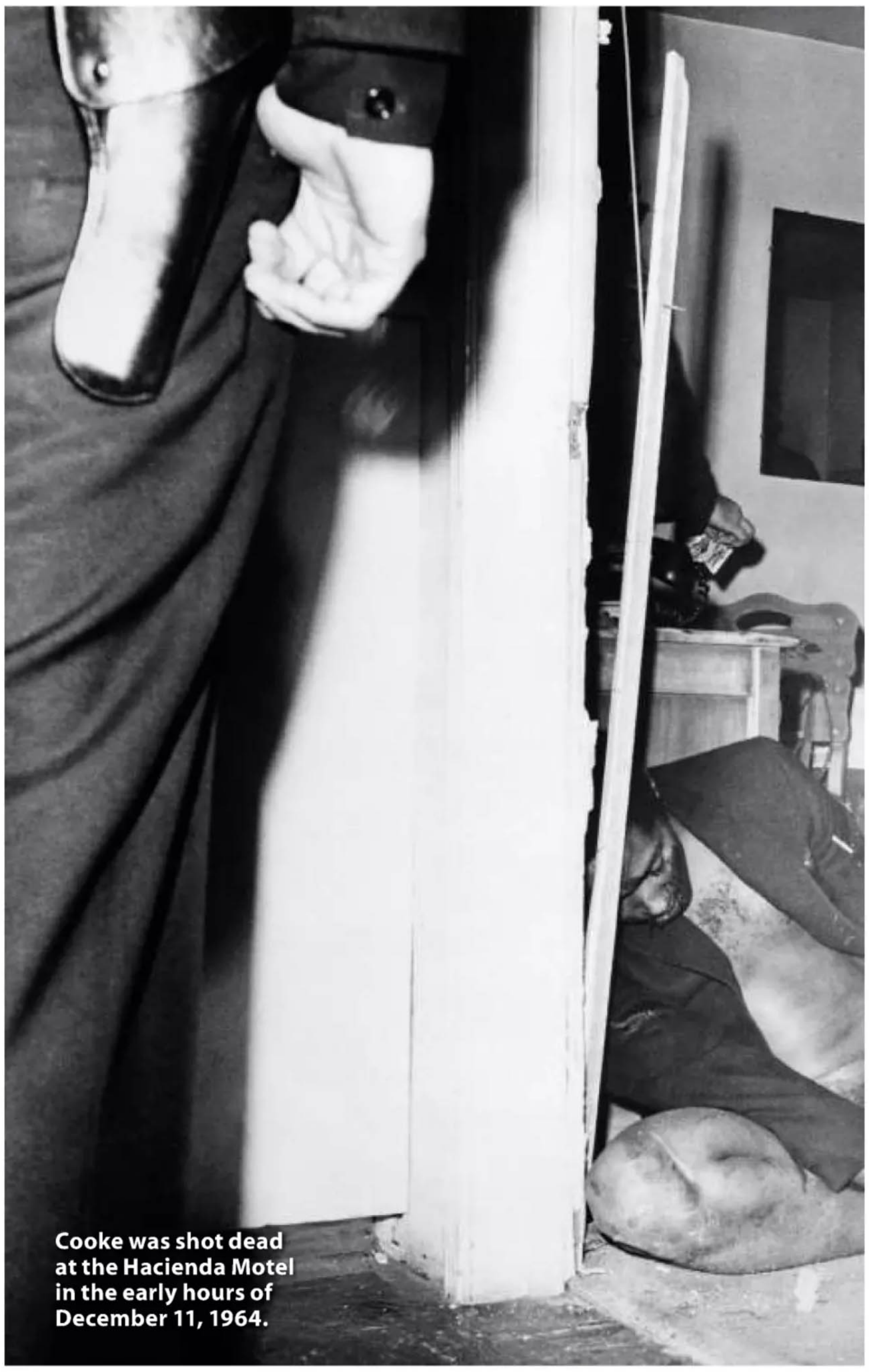
Sam cut no new material for six months after his son's death, and hit the road to numb his grief. In Shreveport, Louisiana, in October 1963, he and his entourage were arrested for attempting to register in a whites-only motel; the ensuing fracas gave him more kudos as a civil rights crusader than he perhaps merited. In New York, he befriended Cassius Clay and Malcolm X.

When Sam did go back into the studio, it was with the exiled New Orleans AFO (All For One) band led by Harold Battiste, a man as committed to the civil rights struggle as any black mu-

SAM COOKE
WONDERFUL WORLD
RCA VICTOR
SAM COOKE
CHAIN GANG
I FALL IN LOVE EVERY DAY
TWISTIN' THE NIGHT AWAY
SAM COOKE
PLUS SWING LOW
sam cooke
Cool Train
Frankie and Johnny
RCA VICTOR
SAM COOKE
45 RPM
NOT FOR SALE
A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

sician in Los Angeles. With Sam's help, Battiste conceived the idea of a network of 'soul stations' that would serve as gathering points for young people in the black community. "I remember vividly sitting at the house on Ames Street [in Los Feliz] and talking about the racial things," Battiste told Daniel Wolff. "We were talking almost in the realm of the black Muslim, about trying to find solutions for the tremendous problems our people were having. Sam was really concerned about that."

It was the AFO band playing on the 1964 album *Ain't That Good News*, the centrepiece of which was a song that represented the culmination of all Sam's thoughts and feelings about black suffering and black pride. A Change Is Gonna Come remains Sam's towering achievement as a songwriter. Released immediately after his death, the song reached out across the airwaves as a clarion call to black America. As Gerri Hirshey remarked, it had all the power of Martin Luther King's Free At Last speech and Otis's posthumous Dock Of The Bay. All the power, too, of Sam's desolate vocal on The Soul Stirrers' Pilgrim Of Sorrow.



Cooke was shot dead at the Hacienda Motel in the early hours of December 11, 1964.

Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images, Bettmann/Corbis

"Real gospel music has got to make a comeback," Sam told writer Don Paulsen in July 1964. "Rhythm and blues is the most fervent sound in pop music." Admirable sentiments, but they were uttered on the eve of the man's return to the Copacabana. Allen Klein spent $10,000 on a 20ft-by-100ft sign on Time Square announcing that Sam was 'The Biggest Cooke In Town', and that outlay seemed justified when the engagement was a triumph. Billboard proclaimed it "a swinging affair that has appeal for the adult expense-account trade as well as for his teenage disk fans", but there were more than a few people shaking their heads at the spectacle. Sam's conflicting musical personas were highlighted again by the bizarre 45rpm coupling of the MOR abomination Cousin A Mine with a new version of the fabulous That's Where It's At.

Sam himself was by all accounts a troubled man. His marriage was over in all but name. People close to Cooke also claimed he was beginning to have serious doubts about Allen Klein. Roy Crain said Sam wanted him to go to New York to meet with Klein. Jess Rand said Sam got back in touch for legal advice.

ON DECEMBER 10, 1964, SAM MET HIS engineer Al Schmitt for dinner at Hollywood music industry hangout Martoni's. Schmitt remembers that the singer got talking at the bar with Elisa Boyer, who'd come to the restaurant with Liberty Records publicity man Jim Benci. When Schmitt and his wife left to catch a show, Sam said he'd see them later at PJs nightclub on Santa Monica Boulevard.

By the time Sam rolled up at PJs, the Schmitts had gone. He talked instead to Nik Venet, the A&R man who'd attempted to sign him to Capitol Records almost five years before. "I tried to talk him into taking my Cadillac instead of his Ferrari, because he'd had a few drinks and mine was easier to drive," said Venet. "He was wearing my coat when he was shot. I took it out of my car because I thought I was going to take his car, but when I went to the parking lot he'd taken the Ferrari and gone."

Many of the details of that night are unclear. We know Cooke checked into the Hacienda Motel with Elisa Boyer around 2.35am, but 20 minutes later he was banging on the locked door of manager Bertha Franklin's office, half naked and demanding to know where Boyer had gone. At that point Boyer was at a phonebox down the street calling the police to say she'd been kidnapped. According to court testimony, Cooke broke down Franklin's door and attacked her; she grabbed her gun from the top of the TV and shot him in the chest. The case was closed after a two-hour coroner's inquest the next day found the shooting was in self-defence.

More than 5,000 people viewed Sam's body at the People's Funeral Home on December 12. The following week 3,000 people were at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chicago for the first funeral, with 7,000 more outside. Sam's body was flown back to LA on Friday 18 for a second service at the Mount Sinai Baptist Church.

Barbara was there with 20-year-old Bobby Womack. Billy Preston played an organ interlude, Lou Rawls sang Just A Closer Walk With Thee and a weeping Ray Charles sang Angels Watching Over Me.

Many refused to believe the official version of the killing. It was described as a "cover-up" by one Baltimore newspaper; another paper in Houston revealed that $1,500 was missing from Cooke's jacket. To this day, some believe Cooke was the victim of a Mafia hit, though there's no evidence to suggest that's the case.

Allen Klein and J.W. Alexander hired private detectives to investigate Cooke's death. Barbara Campbell married Bobby Womack in March 1965, provoking so much outrage that some suggested *they* had something to do with the killing. Campbell dissolved the SAR label, and in April 1966 she sold her half of Sam's publishing to Hugo and Luigi; they in turn sold them to Allen Klein. J.W. Alexander also sold out to Klein.

"If he hadn't left God, left the church, it would never have happened," said one Baptist minister. Of course, that wasn't true. And it was part of Sam's identity crisis that he wanted to be all things to all his fans: to record strings-driven MOR, to sing on gospel shows, to nurture a roster of soul singers. He wanted the Copa and he wanted the Harlem Square Club. But what would he have done if he'd lived? He might have recorded in Memphis, signed to Tamla Motown, played at Monterey alongside his disciple Otis Redding – or missed the boat completely.

What remains is his voice on those records, as loud as ever. Let's leave the last words to Jerry Wexler: "When I listen to his gospel work, everything goes away."

Additional interview material by Harvey Kubernik.

Sound of the suburbs: Larry and Andy Parypa with their mum, Tacoma, early '60s.

BO

OM!

Roaring out of the American Northwest with an exhilarating, unschooled R&B racket that came from deep within, The Sonics blueprinted garage rock. Then commercial indifference, studio sanitisation and the Vietnam War scuppered their career. Lois Wilson charts the extraordinary tale of '60s rock's ultimate cult heroes. ➢

Tall cool ones: The Sonics in 1964 (from left) Andy Parypa, Bob Bennett, Rob Lind, Larry Parypa, Jerry Roslie .

"THEIR FATHER WAS UPSET WHEN HE HEARD THE SONG. HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS THE WAY TO MAKE THEM STARS." *Buck Ormsby*

!!! HERE ARE THE SONICS !!!
THE WITCH • PSYCHO • STRYCHNINE AND MORE!!!
n
the SONICS BOOM

IT'S A LATE AFTERNOON in July 1964, and John 'Buck' Ormsby, the boss of Etiquette Records, a small independent label in Seattle, Washington, has just left his office for home. As he gets to the parking lot, he hears a shout. "Hey you! Ormsby!" He looks up to see Larry and Andy Parypa, the guitarist and bassist in garage rockers The Sonics, accompanied by their father, who's waving his fists in readiness to punch him. The night before, Ormsby had recorded the young Tacoma group's first single, The Witch, a raw, screaming horror show of thumping drums, crashing guitars, raucous sax and fiendish hollers that sounded like nothing on earth.

"Their father was very, very upset," says Buck Ormsby today. "Andy and Larry had played him the record and he didn't think this was the way to make his sons stars. I said, Give it some time, but he didn't believe me. Neither did the band."

"We'd gone in wanting to be the nasty boys," remembers Rob Lind, the group's saxophonist. "To rock'n'roll hard and make as much noise as possible. But we were so nervous, and when we heard the record we all thought we'd blown our chances."

Six months later The Witch had sold 20,000 copies, become the biggest-selling single in America's Northwest and launched a series of seminal 45s by the five-piece steeped in distortion, squall and rabid howls. "And then of course, we thought it might not be so bad after all," chuckles Lind.

THE SEEDS OF THE SONICS WERE PLANTED IN 1961 when senior high school kids Jerry Roslie and Rob Lind chanced upon one another in Wilson High music room. "I heard this guy pounding away on the piano," recalls Lind. "I pulled out a sax and joined in. The band director came out of his office and his exact words were, 'Stop stepping on the cat's tail!' The piano player was Jerry Roslie. He invited me back to his home to play some more and we formed a group right away."

"My parents had me playing the accordion for three years from nine years of age," says Jerry Roslie, "but piano was better for

Courtesy of The Sonics

rock'n'roll. I was trying to emulate Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, whoever's song I was covering, I wanted to be them. Rob had started out on clarinet, but he switched to sax for the same reason I took up the piano. We sounded pretty good together."

TACOMA, THE MODERN PORT CITY WHERE THE pair grew up, was musically fecund in the '60s. "Everyone was in a band," says Lind. "And if they weren't, they were in the process of being in one or wanted to be in one. We were no different. We loved to play, and it was the best way to get girls."

At the scene's epicentre was The Wailers, a five-piece band formed in 1958 who meshed gritty R&B with rock'n'roll built around sax and organ. "Everyone tried to copy them, and copy their songs," says Lind. "I'd stand in front of their sax player when they performed, focus on what he was doing then go home at two in the morning and try to emulate what he played in the bathroom. My mum would come in, 'We're trying to sleep here, go to bed!'"

After high school, Roslie and Lind attended Yakima Junior College together where they formed The Night People – "we wore shades, we thought that made us cool," recalls Lind – then on their return to Tacoma, they changed their name to The Searchers and recruited school pal Bob Bennett on drums; future Moby Grape guitarist Jerry Miller was also in the band.

At the same time, the Parypa brothers, Larry and Andy, had their own outfit moulded on The Wailers called The Sonics, their moniker taken from the sonic booms from the nearby McChord Air Force Base. "That line-up sounded totally different to what we became," remembers Larry Parypa, who had picked up the guitar in his early teens after seeing his uncle performing. "Like most bands at that time we played instrumentals. The Ventures would put out a new album and we'd learn everything on it; also anything Freddie King did. His album *Just Pickin'* was influential on the Northwest."

Etiquette
ET-11
Valet Pub. Co. BMI—2:17
THE WITCH
(J. Roslie)
THE SONICS
4435 6TH AVE., TACOMA, WASHINGTON

The Parypa brothers, eager to forge their own identity, approached Roslie to join them. "They were looking for a piano player," says Roslie. I met up with them, we jammed, they said, 'That sounds pretty good, do you know any sax players?' Well, my best friend is a sax player, so we jammed with Rob… 'That sounds pretty good, now we need a drummer.' Well, my other best friend is a drummer, and we jammed with Bob…"

Meanwhile, the soundscape was changing. With the advent of the Brit Invasion, The Beatles and the Stones, vocal-led songs, not instrumentals, were the thing. Roslie was consequently appointed the singer. "We were standing there with no singer," says Roslie, "and they said, 'Jerry, you give it a try.' I started in, and little by little I started getting into it, I started pushing real hard and this scream came from way down in my soul, it felt good, like my own version of scream therapy, a way to let out the frustration."

Securing a weekend residency at the Red Carpet nightclub in the Tacoma suburb of Lakewood, they cut their teeth on a set of rockin' covers. "Little Richard, Chuck Berry, it was our musical education," says Lind, "it's where we learned to play in front of a crowd."

"We'd be performing in front of 200, 300 teenagers who had all paid a dollar admission to get in, no alcohol," adds Parypa. "They came to dance and hopefully meet a girl."

"It was great," says Roslie, "suddenly girls thought we were really cool, they'd walk right up and tell you their name and that they liked you. We'd hit the goldmine."

"And very quickly this kind of musical metamorphosis took place: we started to play aggressive," explains Lind. "I played what I call attack sax. Larry attacked his guitar, Bob his drums and… we'd be on stage and hear this sound and we'd be, 'Wow, where did that come from?' And it would be Jerry, he was ferocious."

"Jerry had not sung much at all, if at all, but he would get so excited, he would close his eyes and spill his guts," says Parypa. "He had to get really excited, though, otherwise he couldn't do anything, so we'd play with as much feeling as we'd got to get him moving. Right from the start, without discussing it, the five of us wanted to play the same way, which was real hard. Back then, you didn't mike the drums so if you wanted loud drums the drummer had to hit them hard. Bob would hit them so hard that Jerry would get excited and start screaming. It was terrific."

They built a following that, according to Lind, "guaranteed a line going out the door, down the sidewalk and round the block before we'd ➢

Lords of the dance: early Sonics line-ups, including erstwhile singer Marilyn Lodge.

Instru-mental: fledgling Sonics line-up, c.1963.

"WE WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN THE GIRLS AND THE PARTIES, AND WE GOT IT ALL." *Larry Parypa*

< even unloaded our amps", Buck Ormsby, bassist of The Wailers and founder of Etiquette Records, got interested.

"I went to see them rehearse in Bob Bennett's garage, but it was all covers, so I said, Write an original song and then let's go and record a single," Ormsby says.

"We were doing [Little Richard's] Keep A Knockin' every night live and thought it would make a good A-side but Buck said write something yourselves. We said, 'When do you need it?' He said, 'Tomorrow,'" Lind remembers.

That night they wrote The Witch after closing time at the Red Carpet. Next day, they captured it first-take at Seattle's Commercial studio, recording on primitive two-track. "The studio was set up for recording radio jingles," says Ormsby. "The engineer was really shaken during their performance. There was more energy and loudness than he'd ever experienced before, and he was afraid we were going to blow his studio up. I had to assure him we wouldn't."

"We took the elevator up to the 10th floor to the studio, mouths open, hearts racing," recalls Lind. "We set up our equipment, started running through The Witch, and we played it twice as fast as it was intended because we were so nervous. We were only 17 and it was the first time we'd been in a studio. They gave us a studio master and we took it to Larry and Andy's house. We laid on the floor, played it over and over and were distraught. We hated it."

After its surprise success, Etiquette Records demanded an album. Worked up after-hours at the Red Carpet and recorded at Seattle's Audio Recording in an all-night session, 1965's *Here Are The Sonics* comprises half originals, half covers. In the former camp, Psycho, a barrage of bloodcurdling vocals and turmoil made up of guitar, bass, drums, sax, keyboards; Strychnine, a savage uproar about drinking rat poison; and Boss Hoss a serrated-blade rocker about their favourite car, the Ford Mustang.

"I didn't want to sing about love," says Roslie. "Everyone was doing that. I wanted to be wild, to make a racket. I knew what I was singing about was pushing boundaries, and that no one else was doing it; I knew that it was weird. I liked that."

"To be honest we never took notice of what Jerry was singing. It was like, 'We've got to do a song, Jerry's got the words, hey let's do it,'" says Lind.

Fearsome readings of The Contours' Do You Love Me, Little Richard's Good Golly Miss Molly and Richard Berry's Have Love Will Travel, widely acknowledged as the definitive version, were added "out of necessity", according to Lind.

"The album was all done in a hurry and on the cheap," adds Lind. "We called Etiquette 'Cheap Screw Records'. That's why we recorded so many covers. Someone would suggest Have Love Will Travel as we'd do it every night, and you could put it down in one take. We'd say, 'I could probably do that a bit better,' and the engineer was, 'No, that's great, no need, next song.'"

While the album didn't chart, it elevated their local status. "We never really thought in terms of success, though," explains Parypa. "We were only ever interested in picking up girls by playing rock'n'roll, we didn't really care about the album, which is why we were never prepared. But it brought us validation. Jerry and I never thought we were any good when we compared ourselves to the neighbouring Seattle bands. We were never as technically good as them. But we won in the end – bands started copying the way *we* played and covered *our* songs."

Support slots in the Northwest with The Beach Boys, Jan And Dean and The Mamas And The Papas expanded their audience. "We had a joke – 'Send out the clowns to check out the sound,'" says Lind, "but it was neat as we got to play in front of 25,000 people and hang out backstage with the musicians."

A mini-tour with The Kinks, meanwhile, had them star-struck. "We heard You Really Got Me and we were bowled over," recalls

JERDEN
YOU GOT YOUR HEAD ON BACKWARDS
THE SONICS
SONICS
MAINTAINING MY COOL
JERDEN
the SONICS
Sinderella

Courtesy of The Sonics

Lind. “We wanted that energy and we started playing it in our set. We did Tired Of Waiting, All Day And All Of The Night, everything we heard by them. Opening for them was the biggest thrill.”

It didn’t boost their record sales, however, and after their second album, 1966’s *Boom*, made under the same conditions as their first, saw their audience diminish, they left Etiquette and signed to Jerry Dennon’s Seattle-based Jerden label, then home to The Kingsmen.

The change of label coincided with a new direction; the result, 1967’s *Introducing The Sonics*, recorded at Hollywood’s Gold Star Studios with Larry Levine, is less ragged, more pop, though it does contain the absolutely beserk You’ve Got Your Head On Backwards. Despite the song figuring in the reformed line-up’s live set today, the group dismissed *Introducing…* on its release, and time has not softened their view of it.

“That horrible thing,” says Parypa. “We knew for months we had to do an album, but we weren’t thinking about it, talking about it, writing songs for it, we weren’t making the decisions we needed to be making. So we got in the studio and we didn’t have a clue what to do, we just picked some songs out of the air. The engineer wouldn’t let us red-line the VU meters; we were used to turning them as loud as we wanted, so our playing sounded real weedy, and the songs weren’t representative. We thought the album should rot under the floor when we left. I wish it had.”

Oh brother: (left and below) Larry Parypa leads the band through ’60s fashion developments.

When Lind was drafted into the US Navy shortly after the album appeared, it signalled the end. Demoralised, the group disbanded. Lind saw action in the Vietnam War as a carrier pilot flying over Laos. “It was dangerous, I was lucky to get out alive,” he says. Straight after his return to the US, he took part in a one-off Sonics reunion at Seattle’s Paramount Theater.

“This was 1972, I’d literally just got back, the programme director Pat O’Day at Big Rock Jock KJR radio invited us to play,” recalls Lind. “Larry was managing a music store, and after he closed up we worked up three songs, Lucille, Psycho and The Witch. When we came off stage Pat O’Day grabbed us, saying, ‘They loved you like you never left, you’ve got to do a couple more songs,’ but we couldn’t because we hadn’t rehearsed any more.”

After that, the five put music behind them. Lind got his masters in film production from the University of Southern California, directed commercials and training films, then spent 25 years as an airline pilot, finishing up flying coast-to-coast for US Airways.

Larry Parypa, meanwhile, raised his daughter as a single parent working in the corporate department of an insurance company. “I played guitar in a band for a nine-month period in the early ’80s but it got too much with a daughter and a mortgage to pay,” he says.

Roslie ran his own asphalt paving business. “It was a lot easier playing piano,” he says, “but I thought, That chapter is finished in my life. Andy and Larry moved to Seattle, Bob moved to Hawaii, Rob to North Carolina. We didn’t stay in touch.”

JUMP FORWARD TO 2005. THE SONICS GET A CALL. Did they want to play Cavestomp! in New York? Andy Parypa and Bob Bennett opt out but Roslie, Larry Parypa and Lind are keen. “We were scared, though,” says Lind. “We didn’t want to go out on stage and be these pathetic old fools trying to recapture the past with the audience standing there with folded arms, saying how we used to be good. We didn’t want to kill our legacy. We made a pact. We’d only come back if after we’d rehearsed we thought we were good.”

“You’ve got to remember,” adds Parypa, “we had to relearn all of the songs and some of them we’d never played live, we just recorded.”

2005’s Cavestomp! came and went, as did 2006’s, then in 2007 they bit the bullet. When they stepped out on the stage, says Roslie, “I thought I was gonna die. My heart was pounding. I thought, This could be the end of my musical career for ever. I thought I should have a shield in case they start throwing tomatoes, I was shaking playing that keyboard.”

“We’d never played with monitors before,” adds Parypa, “and they were squealing, and even things like the lighting – when we played in the ’60s, lighting consisted of three light bulbs which were on all the time, maybe a red, yellow and blue bulb. There weren’t strobes, they didn’t swirl or do anything interesting like that. ➢

When we came off stage I was pleased it was all over. I thought, Phew we're done."

Since then The Sonics have performed regularly throughout the world, including an extraordinary performance at Meltdown 2011, curated by their old hero Ray Davies.

"That was special," says Lind. "We felt we'd come full circle then. All that was left to do was make a new record."

Produced by Jim Diamond of Ghetto Recorders and recorded in mono at Jack Endino's Soundhouse Studios in Seattle, with bassist Freddie Dennis and drummer Dusty Watson, this year's *This Is The Sonics* has a real fire burning in its belly.

"Jim Diamond said, 'I want the power and energy of the first two albums but without copying them.' That was the thing that really drove us," says Lind.

As a result, originals like Bad Betty are fright-night spectacles, jet-engine-powered loud; covers such as I Don't Need No Doctor, You Can't Judge A Book By The Cover and Leaving Here are a perfect fit. "We Sonics-ised them," says Lind. "We just went in, attacked the songs as hard as we could and Jerry screamed his lungs out. The only difference between then and now was there were no jitters, we were relaxed."

"We spent two weekends and recorded 14 songs," says Parypa. "Half of them we didn't know we were going to do until we got in the studio, and when we were one song short, we just wrote one in the studio and recorded it. I honestly didn't think anyone would give a damn."

Parypa couldn't be more wrong. As pioneers of Northwest garage, a line can be traced directly from them to '70s punk, '80s grunge and the '90s and '00s garage rock scene, ensuring them new generations of fans.

"Life in the music world is unfair like that," concludes Parypa. "Within a mile of my house, I bet there's a guitar player learning his craft who understands music and music theory, who practises every day, and yet no one is ever going to hear him. Whereas we went into it knowing we had to record but didn't want to learn songs.

"We had to write but didn't want to write, we were only interested in the girls and the parties and in the end we got it all… We're still playing packed-out venues today, getting the recognition, getting to make a new record. Yes, life sure can be unfair."

Thanks to Nils Bernstein. The Sonics' This Is The Sonics is out now on Revox Records.

"AFTER PLAYING AT MELTDOWN WE FELT WE'D COME FULL CIRCLE. ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS TO MAKE A NEW RECORD." *Rob Lind*

Merri Sutton

Booming again: Sonics 2015 (from left) Rob Lind, Dusty Watson, Larry Parypa, Freddie Dennis, Jerry Roslie.

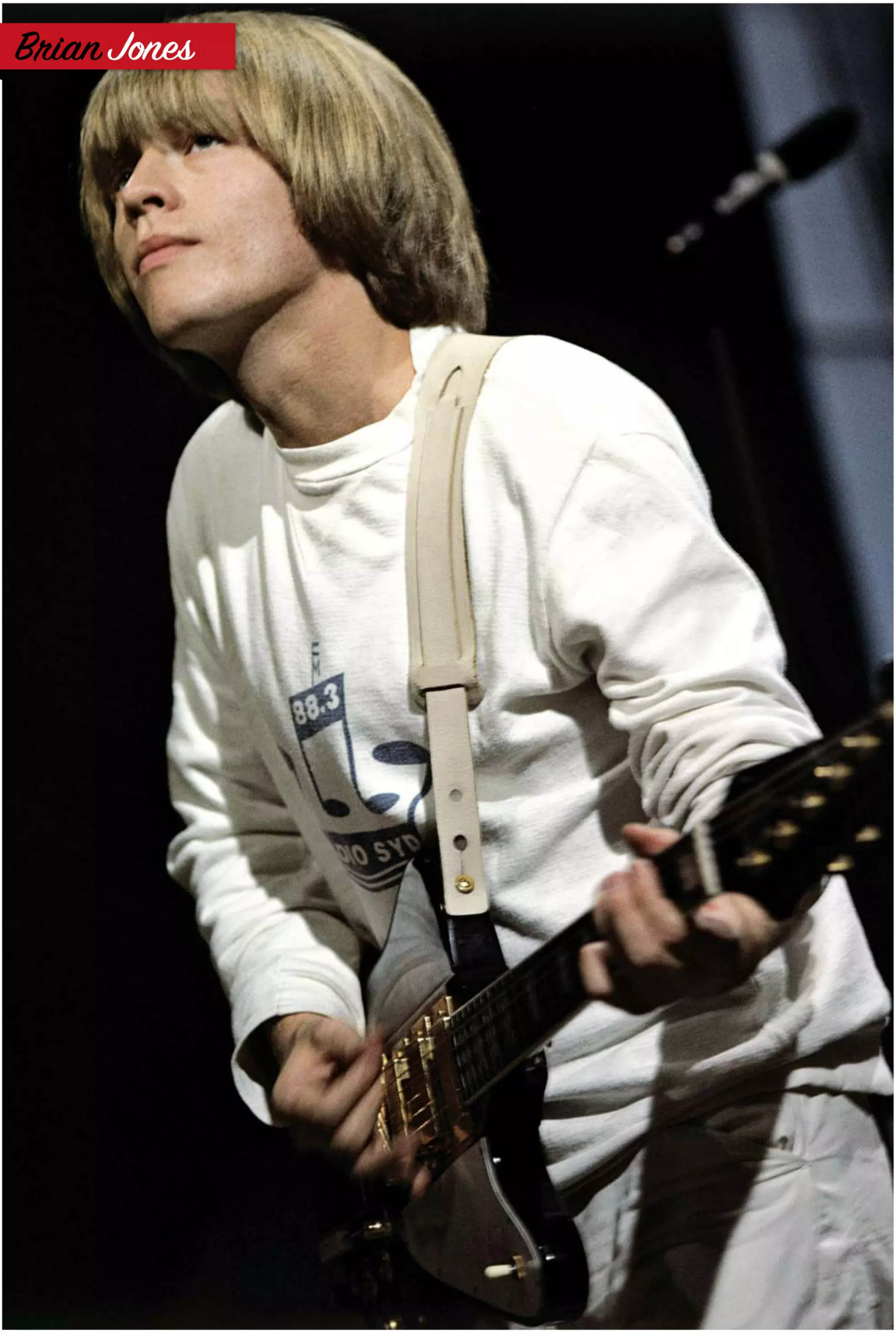
PIN-UPS

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE BEING BEAUTIFUL!

Alamy

Includes THE SMALL FACES | MARIANNE FAITHFULL
BRIAN JONES | THE BYRDS | SCOTT WALKER
FRANÇOISE HARDY | SERGE GAINSBOURG & JANE BIRKIN
OTIS REDDING | TIM BUCKLEY & DUSTY SPRINGFIELD

Brian Jones


FM
88.3
DIO SYD

Alamy

Alamy

Rex

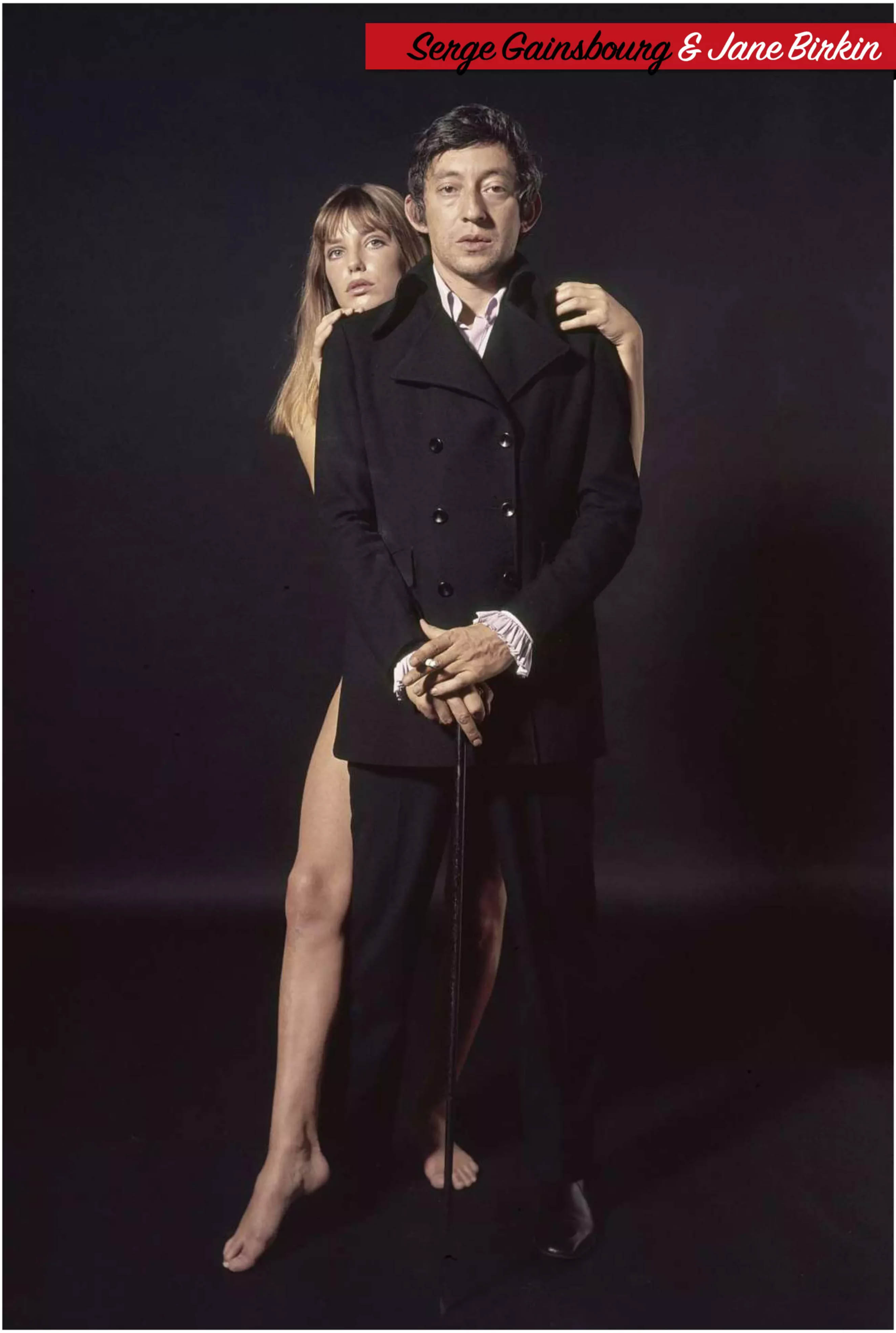
Françoise Hardy

Alamy

Marianne Faithfull

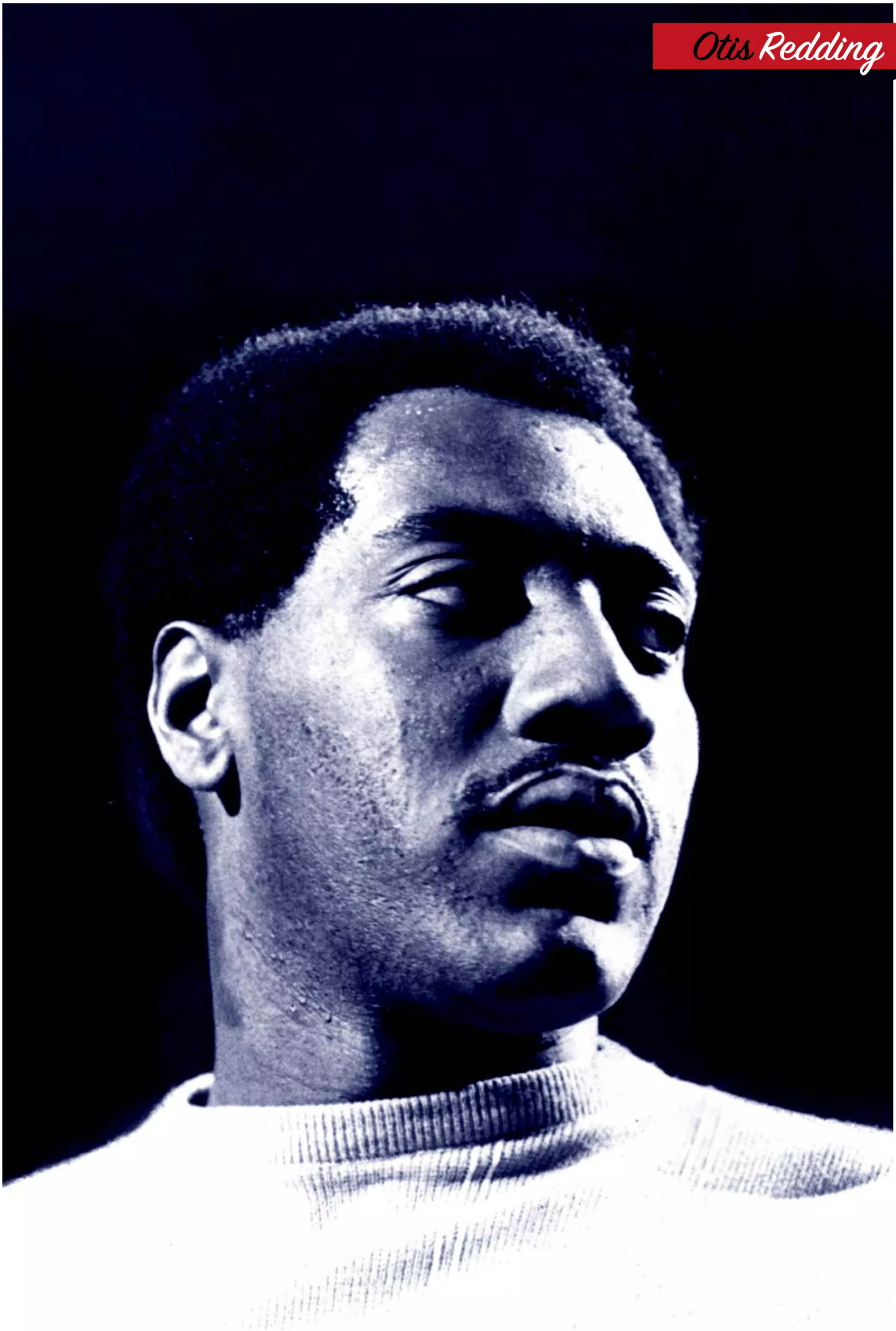
Rex

Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin

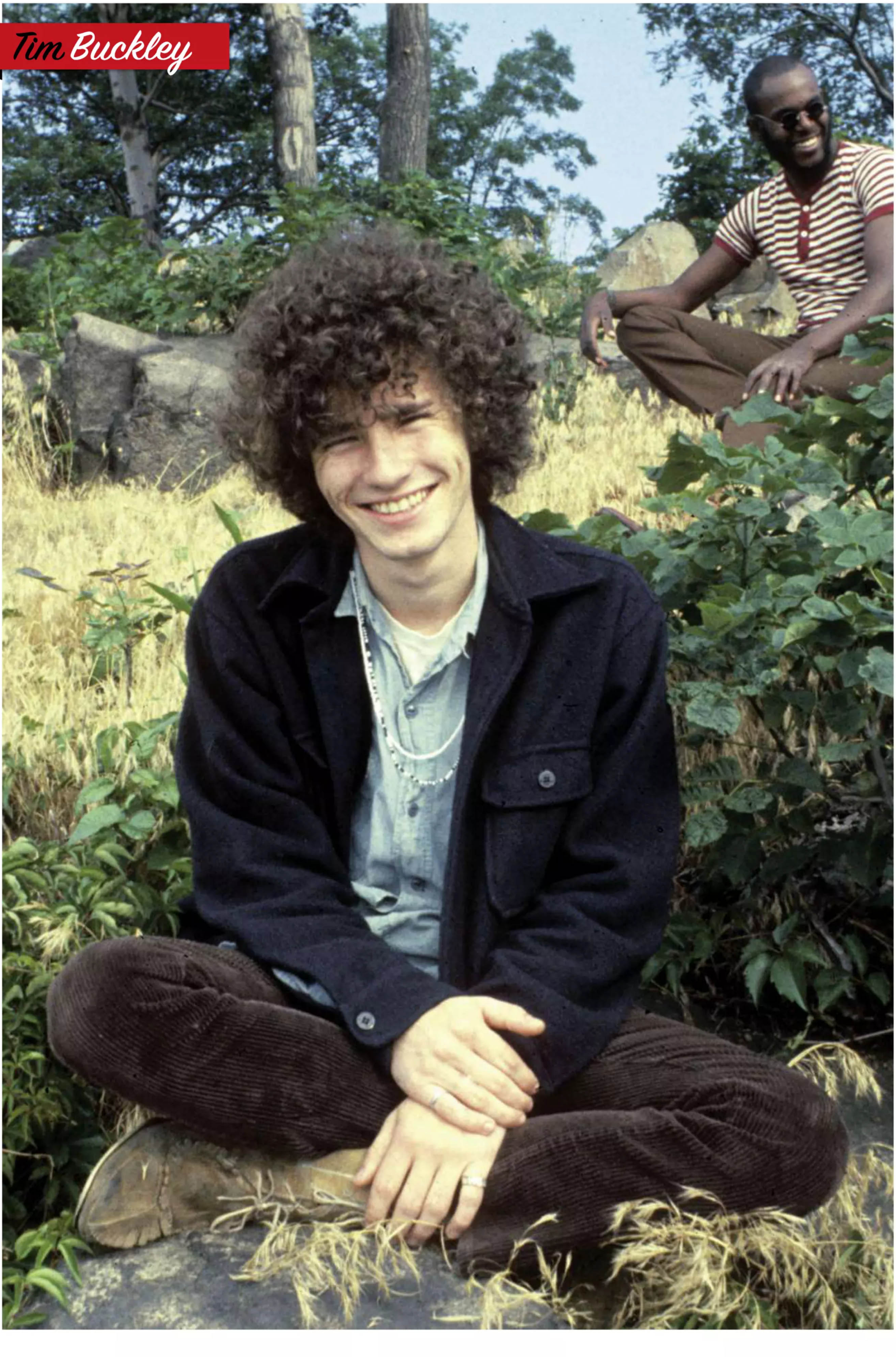


Getty

Alamy



Alamy



Getty

Dusty Spingfield

Rex

REVOLUTION IN HIS HEAD

Fifty years ago, Bob Dylan walked into Columbia's Studio A and invented rock music as we know it. Corralling eyewitness testimony and tracing the roots of Dylan's conversion, MOJO tells the story of *Bringing It All Back Home*. By Ben Edmonds.

Thumb's up: Dylan in New York, 1962.

AS BOB DYLAN PREPARED, IN JANUARY 1965, TO RECORD his fifth album for Columbia, he had much to ponder. Only 12 months had elapsed since the release of *The Times They Are A-Changin'* but the landscape was already unrecognisable. 1964 had seen Beatlemania come into full frenzied bloom, and what might have seemed at first a mere diversion, a human hula hoop, had became a cultural phenomenon. The Beatles had shaken culture to the core, and remade the world.

Bob Dylan had changed dramatically too. The 22-year-old Greenwich Village folk singer had cemented his position as the most important figure on America's most vibrant music scene. A songbook that included Blowin' In The Wind, Don't Think Twice, A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall and With God On Our Side had brought the former Woody Guthrie acolyte an unprecedented notoriety.

"I remember witnessing this one cataclysmic moment," says Lovin' Spoonful leader John Sebastian. "Dylan walked into the Gaslight Cafe and played Hard Rain and Masters Of War. He was trying out this new material, and it was jaw-dropping. The songs spread like wildfire through the Village. Suddenly everybody just *knew* them. It was unbelievable. It was when he could still be this endearing, Chaplin-esque character, but that was changing. As much as people invested in his songs emotionally, that's how much they seemed to have invested in him."

"What can I say?" chuckled journalist Al Aronowitz. "I thought he was the new messiah. I thought his lyrics were the words of a new Bible. I still do."

Yet the expectations accompanying success were troublesome. "You can't imagine what it was like to be Bob Dylan at this time," his running buddy David Blue noted. "One day he was a respected young songwriter, the next he was this *thing*. The Voice Of A Generation. The Man With All The Answers. People were at him all the time. 'Tell me what to think.' 'Tell me where to stand.' 'Tell me who to be.' It was *relentless*. You or I couldn't have stood that kind of pressure. We'd have been crushed by it. Dylan not only stood up to it, he continued to do great work on his own terms in spite of it. But as his life got more surreal, his writing got more surreal. His songs were always true to the life they were written in."

> **"HE WAS TRYING OUT NEW MATERIAL AND IT WAS JAW-DROPPING. THE SONGS SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE."**
> **JOHN SEBASTIAN**

EVEN AS HE WAS BEING ANOINTED WOODY Guthrie's successor as the master of topical folk song, Dylan had one eye on the door. The sloganeering of what he would soon refer to as his "finger-pointing songs" came easily and no longer satisfied its creator. His search for a way to make his words express more led to a deeper investigation of poetry, particularly the febrile works of 19th-century French *enfant terrible* Arthur Rimbaud. Dylan's writing took a giant step.

The origins of this new phase can be traced to a three-week American tour in February 1964, when Dylan, road manager Victor Maymudes, folk singer Paul Clayton and journalist Pete Karman (replaced mid-trip by painter and songwriter Bob Neuwirth) drove coast-to-coast in a blue Ford stationwagon. Dylan in the back, pecking incessantly at a portable typewriter, fuelled by Beaujolais, cigarettes, the odd Benzedrine and parcels of ➤

Getty (2, including opening spread)

Safe from harmonica: in the studio, January 1965, recording *Bringing It All Back Home* (with Kenny Rankin, seated front left).

⋖ marijuana mailed to them at various stops along the way, let the words spill out and watching them dance in new and unexpected ways. Chimes Of Freedom captured this dramatic expansion of consciousness. Though the title suggests yet more topical protest, its stream of images aims higher, an elevation of the despised and dispossessed that would have done François Villon, patron poet of the cursed and criminal, proud. This prayer for "every hung-up person in the whole wide universe" was miles away from the new album he was ostensibly touring to promote. And during a Mardi Gras stopover in New Orleans, he began work on a song that would be as far removed from Chimes Of Freedom as that song was from his earlier work. It was called Mr Tambourine Man.

Eric Andersen, another of the Village's young turks, remembers Dylan's return vividly. "I was at Phil Ochs' apartment," he says, "sitting around with Phil and David Blue. There was a knock on the door, and in rushes Bob with Victor Maymudes. They'd rolled into town minutes before. Bob sat down on the couch and spread out all the writing he'd done on the road. Pages and pages and pages. Poems, songs, notes, it went on and on. Everything seemed of epic proportions.

"This was the raw material, and it was amazing to see it all spread out like that. He sang Chimes Of Freedom and stunned everyone. He had bits of Mr Tambourine Man. Bob was excited about what he'd written. He knew he'd tapped into something significant, and the work was pouring out of him."

There had been a further revelation on this road trip. Via the stationwagon's AM radio, Dylan had been seduced by The Beatles. Though Al Aronowitz claimed the folk singer initially dismissed The Beatles as "bubblegum", divorcing the music from the mania had obviously made a difference.

"I heard The Beatles in New York when they first hit," he told Anthony Scaduto. "Then when we were driving through Colorado we had the radio on and eight of the Top 10 songs were Beatles songs. In Colorado! I Wanna Hold Your Hand, all those early ones. They were doing things nobody was doing. Their chords were outrageous, just outrageous, and their harmonies made it all valid. I knew they were pointing the direction of where music had to go."

THE ALBUM HE CUT IN ONE MARATHON SESSION ON June 9, 1964 wasn't electric, but came as no less a shock to his folk following. Conspicuously absent were "finger-pointing" songs. The material alternated between the poetic and the personal. The latter reinforced what John Sebastian terms "Bob's revolutionary approach to the love song. Don't Think Twice and It Ain't Me Babe had been radical compositions. They're romantic, but with an edge, real *bite*. This guy had a different way of seeing almost everything."

The August release of *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* prompted howls of abandonment and wounded lectures from the protest crowd, but they were scolding a space he'd already vacated. While *Another Side*… wasn't rock'n'roll by any known yardstick, many of its songs – Chimes Of Freedom, It Ain't Me Babe, All I Really Want To Do, Spanish Harlem Incident, My Back Pages – would find their way into the repertoires of the bands he was about to make possible.

Shortly after this recording date, Dylan attended a session for his friend John Hammond Jr that was like a musical premonition. Hammond, son of the legendary executive who'd signed Dylan to Columbia, had recorded with an electrified black blues quartet in 1963, pre-dating even the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. For the mid-'64 sessions released the following year as *So Many Roads*, Hammond assembled the best young white players of his acquaintance.

Hammond: "I played Toronto regularly, where I became friendly with a group called Levon & The Hawks. They'd been the backing band for Ronnie Hawkins, and they sort of inherited his touring circuit. They'd play the wild blood'n'guts clubs on the Jersey shore and then come to New York and play places like Joey Dee's Starlite Lounge. They were an insanely good live band. So I got Robbie Robertson to play guitar, Levon Helm on drums and Garth Hudson on organ. I'd seen Mike Bloomfield, and thought he'd be great ➢

"BOB WAS EXCITED ABOUT WHAT HE'D WRITTEN. HE KNEW HE'D TAPPED INTO SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT." ERIC ANDERSEN

Getty (2)

Blowin' in the mike: at Columbia's Studio A, making *Bringing It All Back Home*.

Generations of love: Bob and Pete at Newport in 1963, two years before Dylan plugged in and Seeger got his axe out.

Allstar

WE SHAN'T OVER

In 1965, the American folk scene was just reaching its peak. So why was it so scared of Dylan going electric? By Peter Relic.

FOR FOLK PURISTS, DYLAN GOING ELECTRIC WAS THE BETRAYAL OF A scene dedicated to protest and social change. Consider the tone of Izzy Young, owner of Greenwich Village's Folklore Center, writing in the November 1965 issue of Sing Out! magazine: "[Dylan] has given up his companions for the companionship of the charts." The rubric of folk was stylistically diverse, encompassing calypso, Cajun, sea shanties, jug band music, chain gang songs, and much more – but rock'n'roll had been unwelcome for some time.

On April 3, 1959, Carnegie Hall hosted Folksong '59, featuring Pete and Mike Seeger, The Selah Jubilee Singers, Jimmy Driftwood and Memphis Slim. When he introduced The Cadillacs, MC and great folk archivist Alan Lomax asked the audience to "lay down [your] prejudices and listen to rock'n'roll". Amid booing, there were walkouts. Funnily enough, Izzy Young defended the programme in that summer's issue of Sing Out!: "[The] point [Lomax] was trying to make was that Negro and white music were mixing, and rock-and-roll was that thing."

So why was the folk crowd, believers in racial integration, so slow to accept rock? Although a black-originated music, rock was escapist, beloved of teenyboppers with no knowledge of mining disasters. Folk fostered the idea that one could know people's stories through song and better society through activism. Lomax wrote in the New York Times Magazine in January 1947: "[Folk music] can play a great role in this century, since our big problem is to realise man's dream for democratic and peaceful plenty."

In the '40s and '50s, this dream was personified by singer-activist Pete Seeger, whose group The Weavers also scored hits with decidedly nonpolitical songs like Goodnight Irene. When Dylan signed to Columbia in 1961, the reason he gave for choosing the label was that Pete Seeger was on the label and had artistic control.

In his book The Incompleat Folk Singer, Seeger identified the "two apparently opposing trends" discernible in every art form: "[R]espect for tradition and the achievements of the past, and… an attempt to change these traditions in accordance with the needs of the artist and his times." Seeger identified folk music as "admirably suited to preserving a balance

> "PEOPLE WHO DON'T CHANGE WILL FIND THEMSELVES LIKE FOLK MUSICIANS, PLAYING IN MUSEUMS."
> **MILES DAVIS**

COME!

between the two", but electric instruments represented show business and required a degree of amplification that divided performer from audience.

Few electric instruments were being played in the Greenwich Village folk clubs before the release of *Bringing It All Back Home* (one exception was Tim Rose, who played electric guitar in The Big Three with Mama Cass). Then came that group from Liverpool.

"The Beatles shut us down," Ian Tyson of Ian And Sylvia wrote in his autobiography I Never Sold My Saddle. "All us folkies were just standing there with egg on our faces. The only one of us who had the guts to challenge the rock'n'roll guys on their own terms was Dylan. He just jumped in."

"I never considered myself a folk singer," Dylan said at the time. "Sure, you can make all sorts of protest songs and put them on a Folkways record, but who hears them? And the people that do are going to be agreeing with you anyway."

Dylan's view, decried at the time, would soon become consensus. By '67, even Pete Seeger – who allegedly threatened to cut the power cable with an axe during Dylan's electric set at Newport '65 – released an album with electric support from The Blues Project.

Dylan going electric certainly didn't shut folk down overnight, its drop-off had begun. Dominant folk stars Joan Baez, Tom Paxton and Phil Ochs remained in the vein, and Izzy Young continued his Monday night live schedule at the Folklore Center in Greenwich Village. But stalwart folk venue Club 47 in Cambridge, MA closed in early '67, and new politically minded artists were more likely to play rock.

May the last word on the matter come from the autobiography of Miles Davis, who knew a thing or two about the umbrage caused by going electric: "People who don't change will find themselves like folk musicians, playing in museums and local as a motherfucker."

"WHEN I FIRST HEARD ELVIS'S VOICE, I KNEW I WASN'T GOING TO WORK FOR ANYBODY. NOBODY WAS GONNA BE MY BOSS."
BOB DYLAN

≺ alongside Robertson. But when he heard Robbie, suddenly he didn't want to play guitar! Robbie was really intense. He had this Telecaster sustain-note reality that was phenomenal; Hubert Sumlin and Roy Buchanan rolled into one, a real gunslinger. So Bloomfield decided he'd rather play piano. Michael had brought Charlie Musselwhite with him from Chicago to play harp. It was Charlie's first time in a studio. Bob stopped by, which was not unusual. That's when I introduced him to the guys in The Hawks. Dylan was there checking it out, and you could tell he was really digging it."

Dylan wasn't the only one in Greenwich Village thinking about plugging in. Fred Neil and Tim Hardin both played with amplified accompaniment on occasion, though in the jazz/blues tradition. One of their regular accompanists, John Sebastian, was also part of a loose cast of adventurous Village musicians assembled by producer Erik Jacobsen to investigate post-Beatle possibilities; others included Jerry Yester, Jesse Colin Young and Felix Pappalardi. Sebastian was about to meet Zal Yanovsky, a refugee from another folk mutation called The Mugwumps (featuring half the future Mamas And The Papas); together they'd hatch The Lovin' Spoonful.

THEN IN SUMMER 1964 CAME THE ANIMALS' worldwide Number 1 with their tempestuous arrangement of a folk standard tentatively essayed on Dylan's first album. "House Of The Rising Sun in rock," Dylan would marvel. "Rock! It's fuckin' wild! Blew my mind."

"To those of us who really knew him, it wasn't in the least bit surprising that Bob Dylan would be fascinated with amplified sound," says John Sebastian. "We knew he'd had teenage rock'n'roll bands back in Minnesota – that was an experience common to those of us of a certain age. Some of my earliest memories of Bob involve the two of us sitting in the basement of Gerdes Folk City playing old rock'n'roll, obscure Johnny Cash records on Sun, gospel, surf music! Buddy Holly was a big favourite. It wasn't all Woody Guthrie."

Dylan's youthful parade of heroes had been varied, electric and invariably intense. First it was Hank Williams And The Drifting Cowboys, a song machine and a band that kept it moving. Then it was big-beat blues courtesy of Gatemouth Page's No-Name Jive radio show that somehow reached Hibbing, Minnesota. "Late at night," Bob told Rolling Stone, "I used to listen to Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed and Howlin' Wolf, blastin' in from Shreveport. I used to stay up 'til two, three in the morning. Listened to all those songs, then tried to figure them out."

The piano-pounding of Little Richard and the Sun singles of Elvis Presley sealed the deal. As he remembered in 1987, "When I first heard Elvis's voice I just knew that I wasn't going to work for anybody and nobody was gonna be my boss. Hearing him for the first time was like busting out of jail." This validation of the outsider, always central to rock'n'roll, would lead Robert Zimmerman to Woody Guthrie, and it would lead Bob Dylan back to rock'n'roll.

As he would sing in Maggie's Farm, in late '64 Dylan had a head full of ideas, driving him insane. You can sense the turmoil on *The Bootleg Series Vol. 6*, the concert recorded at New York's Philharmonic Hall on October 31, where the tension between the old-school finger- ➢

➢ pointing of Hard Rain and the fun of If You Gotta Go, Go Now (essentially, pre-plugged rock'n'roll) is palpable. Then there's It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding), Gates Of Eden and Mr Tambourine Man – powerful lyrics operating on a whole new level.

Mr Tambourine Man, begun on the station wagon trip in February, had been finished two months later at the New Jersey home of Al Aronowitz. "He stayed at our house a lot," Aronowitz recalled. "If he was at his own apartment I guess people could find him, you know? This one night he asked to borrow my portable typewriter, which he set up in the breakfast bar off the family room. He said he had something he needed to write. He sat there typing away in a cloud of cigarette and other smoke, listening to Marvin Gaye sing Can I Get A Witness. Every time it ended, he'd have to get up and walk into the living room to put the needle back at the beginning. He played that record over and over and over again while he wrote. I was still hearing Can I Get A Witness as I drifted off to sleep. The next morning he played us what he'd stayed up all night writing: Mr Tambourine Man. Is it any wonder I was convinced he was our Shakespeare? Later, as I was taking out the trash, I saw that he'd thrown away his false starts and rough drafts, all sorts of stuff he hadn't used. I smoothed out the pages and put them in a file, where they remain."

A PUBLISHER'S ACETATE OF AN EARLY VERSION OF Mr Tambourine Man, cut at the *Another Side…* session with Ramblin' Jack Elliott singing harmony, had found its way into the appreciative hands of Los Angeles hipster Jim Dickson. He was working with The Jet Set, another group of disaffected folkies who'd got an electric shock from The Beatles. Somehow Dickson envisioned Dylan's long, surreal song-poem as a snappy addition to their rock'n'roll repertoire. Dickson contended that Dylan actually dropped by to watch his charges – who'd soon rechristen themselves The Byrds – rehearse the song, and was enthused by their electric 12-string treatment, exclaiming, "Wow, you can even dance to it!"

Tom Wilson, Dylan's producer since 1963, was intrigued by similar possibilities. A musical adventurer who'd cut his teeth producing Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor, he'd later shepherd the debut recordings of The Velvet Underground and The Mothers Of Invention. In December he took three of Dylan's old tracks into the studio and attempted to modernise them with electric overdubs. (Interestingly, he was assisted in this experiment by doo wop icon Dion, then forsaking pop for the folk scene downtown, tracing Dylan's trajectory in reverse.) The mediocrity of the one track that has surfaced – a pallid replication of The Animals' House Of The Rising Sun arrangement, included on the 1994 *Highway 61* CD-ROM – fully explains the obscurity of the rest. The following year Wilson would apply this overdub strategy more successfully to an acoustic Simon And Garfunkel song, The Sound Of Silence, creating a folk-rock smash and an unexpected career for the artists.

All of these currents were swirling around Bob Dylan when he set about recording his fifth album in January 1965, but he had no concrete plans. When it comes to recording, planning is not Dylan's thing. "[The Beatles] work much more with the studio equipment, they take advantage of the new sound inventions," he told a Sing Out! interviewer in 1968. "I don't know anything about it. I just do the songs and sing them and that's all." On the album he would call *Bringing It All Back Home*, his method was no less mysterious. Despite the precedents pushing him toward electrification, he was looking for a sound nobody had ever heard, by implication a sound that nobody had ever played.

The first session, on January 13, found Dylan playing solo, with the unlikely addition of John Sebastian on bass. Sebastian was a harmonica virtuoso who could also handle guitar and autoharp, but was completely unfamiliar with bass. "I told [Dylan] I wasn't a bass player," Sebastian says. "But he just said, 'Don't worry, it'll be fine.' I showed up, was handed a Fender bass, and did the best I could. I got the distinct impression that this session was for Bob to hear himself and consider his options. He hinted that something more would probably happen, but he wasn't specific. I don't know that we came away with any keepers that day."

Rex

"HE SAT THERE TYPING AWAY IN A CLOUD OF CIGARETTE SMOKE, LISTENING TO MARVIN GAYE SING CAN I GET A WITNESS. HE PLAYED THAT SONG OVER AND OVER WHILE HE WROTE."

AL ARONOWITZ

They didn't. Dylan acoustically ran through many of the songs he'd subsequently cut with electric backing, plus two unusually tender ballads not destined to make the final cut. I'll Keep It With Mine (included on *Biograph*) and Farewell Angelina (on *The Bootleg Series*) would've been jewels in any other setting, but there was no room for them on an album already bursting its vinyl seams at 47-plus minutes. Also attempted this first day was an obviously major new piece, It's All Over Now, Baby Blue. In light of all that was about to happen – all that had in fact been happening for some time – this was a farewell song that people would have a field day interpreting.

ON JANUARY 14 AND 15, DYLAN NAILED THE album's 11 keepers in an assortment of configurations from solo to full band, the cast shifting continually as the singer searched for the right combination of musical colours. Each band was an ad hoc jumble of seasoned session pros like drummer Bobby Gregg, guitarist Al Gorgoni and bassist Will Lee (father of filmmaker Spike), friends like John Sebastian (who'd step aside for Spoonful bassist Steve Boone the following evening) and John Hammond, plus the occasional wild card. In the latter category was Kenny Rankin, a young pop-jazz singer then signed to Columbia who was not a session man and had never played rock'n'roll – or even an electric guitar – before being drafted by producer Tom Wilson for the combo that cut Maggie's Farm and On The Road Again.

"I had only just begun to play, really," Rankin recalled. "I didn't know many chords, but I guess Tom liked my sense of rhythm. Columbia owned Fender guitars, so they got me a Telecaster and I sat down and played rhythm. I didn't know anybody else who was there. There was minimal soundcheck – they got basic balances and checked the mike. It was all completely loose. There was no rehearsal to speak of, no charts, and no instructions I can recall. Dylan would just start playing, and you'd better be ready. We did our best to fall into a groove behind him. There might be two takes, if that. It was almost a blur. There wasn't much interaction with anybody. I didn't even shake his hand. I don't think we exchanged a word."

Lead guitarist Bruce Langhorne played the previous day, but the approach was the same. His band was the one that fails to start playing at the beginning of Bob Dylan's 115th Dream, causing the take to break down into the laughter that's preserved on the final record. "Oh yes, the famous false start where the band forgets to come in," Langhorne laughs. "Well, we didn't forget. We had no idea to begin with! The band didn't know anything about the tune. Bob would just step to the microphone and launch into a song. No warning, no explanation, no nothing. We'd just leap in and try to keep up. ➢

All too beautiful: "Bob would just launch into a song. No warning, no explanation, no nothing. We'd just leap in and try to keep up."

Somehow everybody found a way to tune in to what Bob was going for. He didn't really know what he wanted, but his absolute certainty about the song he was singing pulled us all behind in its wake. He didn't try to arrange people's performances. It was spontaneous, almost telepathic. We had to catch the moment – there was no going back and fixing things with overdubs. I thoroughly enjoyed myself."

Dylan appeared to agree. Despite his short musical attention span and the shifting personnel, he attacked each song with relish. "There's a picture that really captures that moment for me," says John Sebastian. "Bob and I are playing guitars to each other, just goofing off and stomping in the studio before tape started rolling. I was singing to him, 'I got a car it's a white convertible/I race down the highway in my white convertible/My white convertible.' It was a song I used to play in teen bands, probably a local record that came out of some New Jersey garage. Nothing profound; just good dumb fun."

THE *BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME* sessions reconnected Dylan with what it was like to crank it up and play, the rush he'd gotten from his high school combos the Shadow Blasters and Elston Gunn & The Rock Boppers. For a man who prided himself on the infrequency of his smiles – he and Neuwirth reportedly attended the funniest movies they could find for the express purpose of training themselves not to laugh – photos from these sessions show someone who often can't contain his glee. He's transported back to the kid who, friends recall, upon hearing Rock Around The Clock in the 1955 film Blackboard Jungle shouted, "Hey that's our music! That's written for us!" In the aftermath of Buddy Holly's death, Dylan had come to feel that rock'n'roll no longer spoke for him. Now, a decade later, he was reclaiming it.

Nowhere is this more exhilaratingly illustrated than on Subterranean Homesick Blues. This first-take masterpiece swings like crazy (at a tempo that trims the time of the previous day's acoustic version by a full half-minute), bringing out a rhythmic swagger in Dylan's singing that marks it as not simply inspired by Chuck Berry's Too Much Monkey Business but a true inheritor of its tradition, another link in the linguistic chain that would lead to rap. But notwithstanding that obvious debt, this is rock'n'roll that has little to do with Berry's contained duckwalk; it's a rattling noise that these musicians rustled up off the top of their heads. Adding to the record's proto-garage feel is a buried but significant fuzztone guitar – this a good five months before the Stones sparked garageland fuzzmania with Satisfaction.

Maggie's Farm, cut on the final day and with a different band, is almost as good: a song of surreal defiance that musicologists say is derived in part from Pete Seeger's Down On Penny's Farm. (Some of the cadences of Subterranean Homesick Blues can be traced to Taking It Easy, a song Seeger wrote with Woody Guthrie.) Outlaw Blues and On The Road Again are based on fairly generic blues-rock progressions, but what a joyful, sloppy noise they make. The words of his rockers detail frustration with a world turned inside-out, but it's like he's lining up shadows for this amplified racket to blast away.

And the album's non-rock material is a revelation too. Love Minus Zero/No Limit and She Belongs To Me are softer full-band performances that give the electric side its breathing room; the former is tender, the other seductively mean-spirited. Rick Nelson, whose records the teen Zimmerman admired, took a country-inflected She Belongs To Me into the US Top 40 in 1969 (and his version of *Bringing…* outtake If You Gotta Go may be definitive). Nelson, who died in 1985, once told this writer, "She Belongs To Me is sung like a love song, but it's not really a love song, is it? It's something different, darker. I was a fan of Dylan's folk songs. Who wasn't? But this was the album that really did it for me, because it seemed to contain everything you'd ever need."

The four acoustic songs that comprise side two were cut on the third and final day of recording. Dylan is known for trying different arrangements, but Mr Tambourine Man, It's All Right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding) and Gates Of Eden hadn't changed since he'd been playing them live; their development was about Dylan's command of them, each performance another step towards committing them to tape. As impressive as these songs had been at Philharmonic Hall only weeks before, the performances here reduce all previous versions to mere sketches.

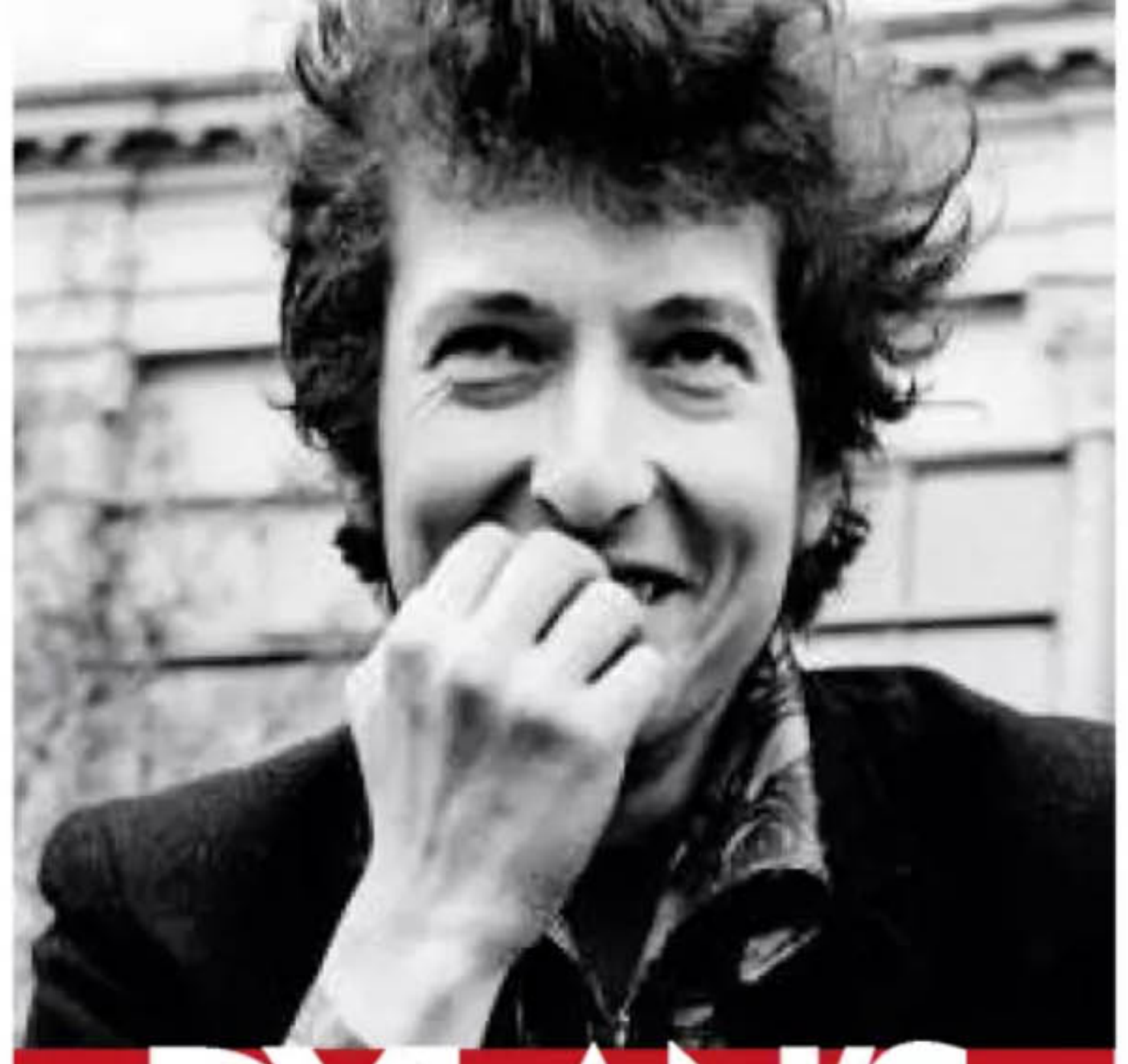
In the text accompanying his 1967 book of Dylan photographs, Daniel Kramer recounted how the singer recorded all three in one continuous, uninterrupted take. Talking to MOJO years later, Kramer said it may have been only two songs. Session logs point toward It's Alright Ma and Gates Of Eden – still a formidable accomplishment.

"My memory is hazy," Kramer admitted, "because I was involved in photographing the moment rather than watching it. But I definitely remember Bob announcing to the booth that he was going to do these numbers straight through once and once only, and they better not make any mistakes because he wasn't going to do it again. And that's exactly what he did. No false starts, no stumbles, no mistakes. Magic was being made right in front of our eyes."

It took six takes to get Mr Tambourine Man. But what they got – with just the singer's acoustic guitar and harmonica, and the firefly electric lines of Langhorne – is not simply the perfect expression of the 'new' Dylan, but a performance for the ages. He said years later that he'd tried to write a follow-up to this song and failed. This bewitching song about sailing willingly into the unknown would have no proper follow-up, perhaps, until Van Morrison's Into The Mystic.

THE EXPANDED HEADWORLD OF *Bringing It All Back Home* was perfectly captured in Daniel Kramer's cover photograph. Taken in Albert Grossman's Woodstock living room, it features an intense Dylan, in a dark jacket and holding a blue-gray cat, making full eye contact with the camera. Albert Grossman's wife Sally, in a red dress, lounges on the couch behind him, while various objects are scattered about the room – paintings, a fallout shelter sign, a glass sculpture by the singer, and albums by Lord Buckley, Robert Johnson, Eric von Schmidt, Lotte Lenya and The Impressions. His most recent album, *Another Side…*, is tucked away in the background, as antique as the 18th-century painting on the mantle behind it.

The edges of the square image are blurred in a circular fashion, lending an extra touch of unreality to this portrait of what appears to be the world's first psychedelic classical composer. "No one had seen Dylan look like that before," said Kramer. Indeed,



DYLAN'S ROCK JUKEBOX

Ten records that prefigured *Bringing It All Back Home.*

JOHN LEE HOOKER
I'm In The Mood

Bob opened for Hooker at Gerdes Folk City in 1961.
Available on: *The Real Folk Blues CHESS*

ROY ORBISON
Candy Man

An operatic voice Dylan revered, singing a Brill Building rock song written by folkie Fred Neil.
Available on: *Big O SONY*

THE ROLLING STONES
Not Fade Away

The Stones put a Bo Diddley engine in a Buddy Holly chassis. "They're fresh!" raved Dylan.
Available on: *Singles 1963-65 DECCA*

FRANÇOISE HARDY
Et Même

This Spector knock-off was what the French considered folk.
Available on: *The Vogue Years CAMDEN*

JOHNNY CASH
I Walk The Line

"Shut up and let him sing!" Cash told critics of Dylan in 1964.
Available on: *The Essential SONY*

THE SIR DOUGLAS QUINTET
She's About A Mover

Dylan recognised kindred spirits in Doug Sahm and Augie Meyers.
Available on: *The Best Of WESTSIDE*

LORD BUCKLEY
The Nazz

Buckley was a "hipster bebop preacher", said Bob in Chronicles.
Available on: *His Royal Hipness MUSICRAFT*

LITTLE RICHARD
Tutti Frutti

Bob's high-school year book ambition? "To join Little Richard."
Available on: *The Specialty Sessions SPECIALTY*

THE MIRACLES
I'll Try Something New

Bob described Smokey Robinson as "America's greatest living poet".
Available on: *The Ultimate Collection MOTOWN*

HANK WILLIAMS
Lost Highway

The first poetry Bob Dylan discovered, and still the deepest.
Available On: *The Essential METRO*

Alamy, Rex

each time you saw a new picture of the singer in this 1964-66 period he looked a little different, like a giant alien flower slowly unfolding.

"This was my first album cover," said Kramer. "I knew that the music was special and different, so I didn't want the image to have any relationship to anything people would recognise. Until this, Dylan wouldn't pose for me; he preferred that I capture him in motion. On the morning of the shoot I made a test shot without Bob in it, and he grasped immediately what I was going for. He selected many of the objects, I selected some, and Sally probably put something in. It got too crowded at one point, a little too over-produced, and we had to back off. The blurry effect was something I had to create by hand. I built a rig that enabled me to rotate the camera, and the shot combines static and moving exposures. I wanted it to feel like the universe moving around him."

According to Kramer, "The Columbia art director didn't like it. He hadn't wanted me to do it. He sort of resented being presented with a guy who'd never done an album cover. But Albert Grossman said in no uncertain terms that I was doing it, and that was that. It was a rather uncomfortable political moment, but I got to laugh about it later. When the cover was nominated for a Grammy, the art director was nominated along with me – so our names are linked together forever."

Bright future: *Bringing It All Back Back Home* was, Dylan said, "vision music".

ERIC ANDERSEN RECALLED the evening when Dylan heard the first acetate of *Bringing It All Back Home*. "It was at Albert Grossman's townhouse in Gramercy Park – me, Bob, Joan Baez, my first wife Debbie Green, Bobby Neuwirth. It was the first time anybody had heard the album. Bob put it on this rickety old record player and turned it up. He was obviously happy. We were dancing around the room for the entire length of the first side, and we were transported by the performances on side two.

"It was like the old Ezra Pound adage that music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance, and poetry begins to atrophy when it gets too far from music. Dylan got them all together. He got people tapping their feet and listening to the lyrics at the same time. I remember Joan dancing around the room with Neuwirth. It was exciting. Bob felt he'd succeeded in pushing himself to someplace new, a place he'd never been before. I flashed back to when he returned from the road trip and played us Chimes Of Freedom, so excited about the artistic leap he was making. It seemed like a lifetime ago, but it was only a few months."

Bringing It All Back Home begins the trilogy of electric albums – with *Highway 61 Revisited* later in '65 and *Blonde On Blonde* the following year – that touched off a firestorm of controversy. They were flames Dylan did his best to stoke with his electric set at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival and the ensuing world tour with The Hawks. Yet from today's standpoint, the wails of of abandonment emanating from the folk establishment seem ludicrously overstated. Dylan's ramshackle new music was no commercial sellout, no emulation of Merseybeat chart rock. In fact, the one song that might have fit that bill, If You Gotta Go Go Now, didn't make the album (freeing it to become a hit for Manfred Mann).

Unlike, say, Richard Fariña, who'd used electric instruments as props on a couple of songs, Dylan was engaged in the serious search for a new musical language, one that could keep up with the advances he'd made as a writer. While it is certainly true that side one of this album represents his first steps toward this language, a style he would further explore and refine, there is no album in the entire Dylan catalogue that contains as much joy, even when he's expressing paranoia or cataloguing madness. There's the joy in his heightened level of word-play, and in the elemental act of play that has turned countless garages into the walls of Jericho.

DECADES ON WE CAN HEAR THAT THIS SUPPOSED sellout is as dense with social insight as any album he ever recorded, and contains a higher concentration of unforgettable lines: "Money doesn't talk, it swears"; "There's no success like failure, and failure's no success at all"; "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows"; "He not busy being born is busy dying".

There are those who have interpreted the electric-side/acoustic-side format as timidity on Dylan's part, an unwillingness to fully commit to the new music. But there's a larger picture. What we find on *Bringing It All Back Home* is every song taken on its own terms and getting what it needed. On the electric side are acoustic songs with a rhythm section; on the acoustic side he is sometimes supported by an electric guitar. No song is denied anything, and what he is saying is that anything is now possible. Dylan abhorred the term 'folk rock'. He preferred to call this "vision music", and it is less about a new style than it is the expression of a new consciousness.

Much was made of the impact Dylan's departure had on the folk scene, but absolutely nothing would be the same after this album. Label executive Andy Wickham recalls Freddie Garrity of Freddie And The Dreamers screaming at him, "You've got to do something about this Bob Dylan – he's killing us!"

Dylan had escaped the expectations of his folk audience, but in creating a new rock audience he also created a whole new set of expectations – another trap he'd eventually have to extricate himself from.

But for the time being, while he waited for the album's March release, he was still doing a dance with his past. There was a joint tour with Joan Baez in February – the king and queen of folk music lording over a kingdom that was already a fading memory. From there he'd go on the Don't Look Back tour of England, where The Times They Are A-Changin' had become an unexpected hit single. Was that two, or was it three, Bob Dylan masks ago? No matter. With *Bringing It All Back Home* he had made a map of his future, and ours. Ⓜ

Acknowledgements: Stoned by Andrew Loog Oldham; The Recording Sessions [1960-1994] and Behind The Shades Revisited by Clinton Heylin; Bob Dylan & The Beatles by Al Aronowitz; Performing Artist by Paul Williams.

MORE BOB! Turn the page for the story of Dylan's headline-grabbing 1965 tour of England.

DYLAN comes to town

In spring 1965, a few weeks after *Bringing It All Back Home* hit the shelves, Bob Dylan embarked on a UK tour whose dramatic events, in public and backstage, were immortalised in D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 film Dont Look Back. On the following pages, we celebrate that historic visit with images capturing Bob's first foreign outing after embracing rock…

ON APRIL 26, 1965 BOB DYLAN and his small touring entourage, including road manager and friend Bob Neuwirth, manager Albert Grossman and girlfriend Joan Baez arrived at London Airport – soon to be renamed Heathrow – on flight TWA 702 to prepare for an eight-date tour of English cities.

Dylan, then 23 years old, was on the cusp of an extraordinary musical transformation. For three years, he'd been the toast of the new folk scene, attaining the status of poet and seer via a series of ever-more dazzling albums. But in January 1965, attuned to energy of the British Invasion and reconnecting with his own roots as a teenage rock'n'roller, Dylan redrew the battle lines of folk by recording a whole side of electrified music for his fifth LP, *Bringing It All Back Home* (see feature, p76).

The record had been available for just over a month when the singer landed in London, a city he'd first visited in 1962 as a virtually unknown musician. There to greet him this time was a deeply curious press, eager to learn more about this newly anointed cultural icon, plus a small army of fans.

Present, too, was US filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker, who'd persuaded Dylan to be the subject of a fly-on-the-wall documentary, the astonishing (and deliberately misspelt) Dont Look Back. The visit – which began on April 30 at Sheffield's City Hall and ended on May 10 at London's Royal Albert Hall – was alive with dramas involving the press as well as friends and disciples including Donovan and former Animals keyboard player Alan Price.

The following selection of images captures the spirit of that tour, from moments of madness to quiet reflection, tea-drinking to in-jokes… ➢

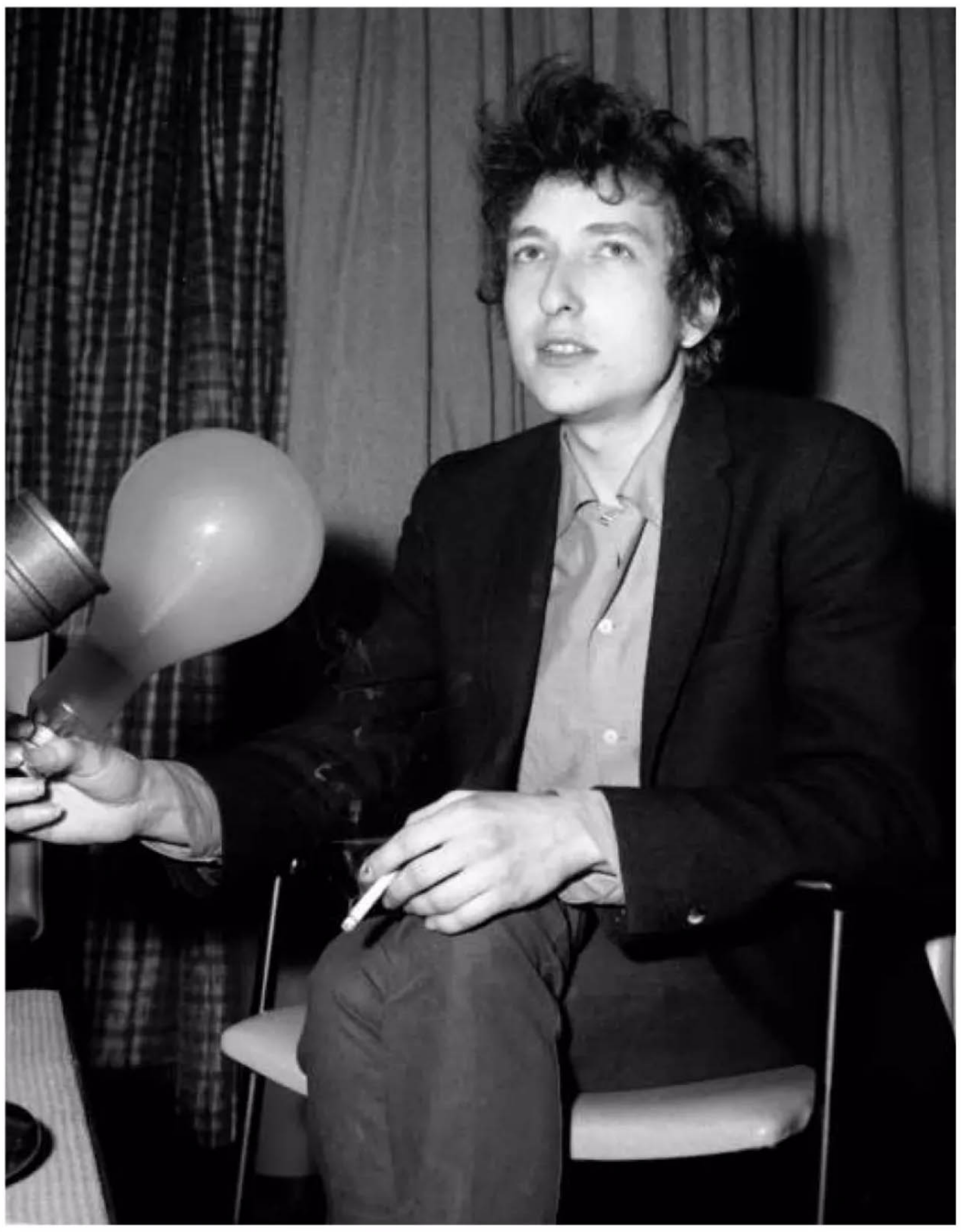
Mirrorpix

AIRPORT
198
POLICE
AP
198

THE ARRIVAL
Bob Neuwirth and a London bobby guide Dylan, Joan Baez and publicist Ken Pitt through the throng of around 150 fans waiting for the singer at London Airport.

GIVE THE ANARCHIST A CIGARETTE

Dylan and Baez meet journalists at a press conference held at London Airport. Note the oversize lightbulb, a gift from "a very affectionate friend", which the singer will take with him to the Savoy Hotel.

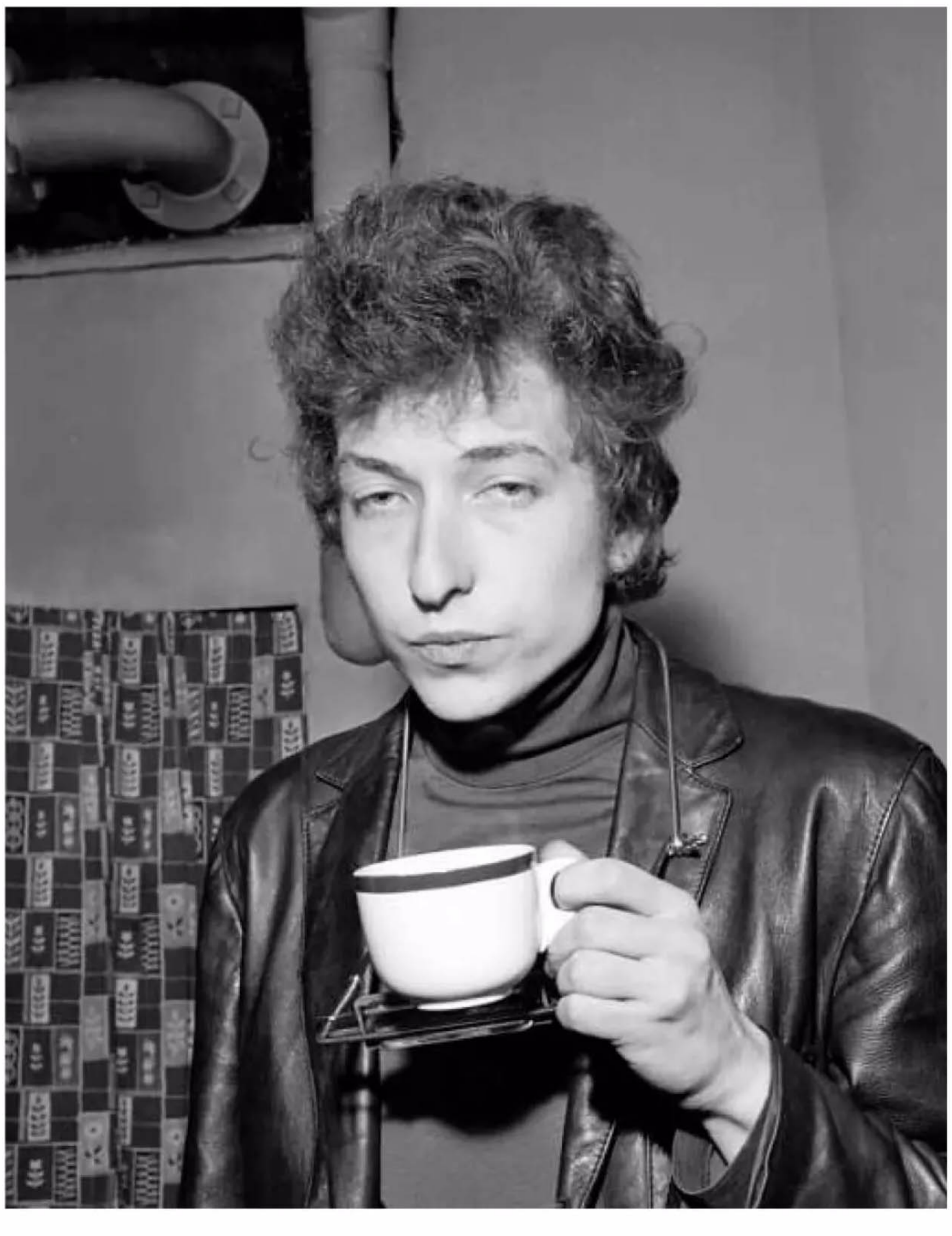


▲LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Bob Dylan at the London Airport press conference. "I have no message for anyone," he says. He does, however, offer the advice, "Keep a good head and always carry a lightbulb. I plugged it in and my house exploded."

▼TEA TIME

Dylan backstage at an unknown location. Asked about the new direction suggested by *Bringing It All Back Home*'s Subterranean Homesick Blues, he says, "I don't think it's rock'n'roll, I think it's early, authentic folk music."



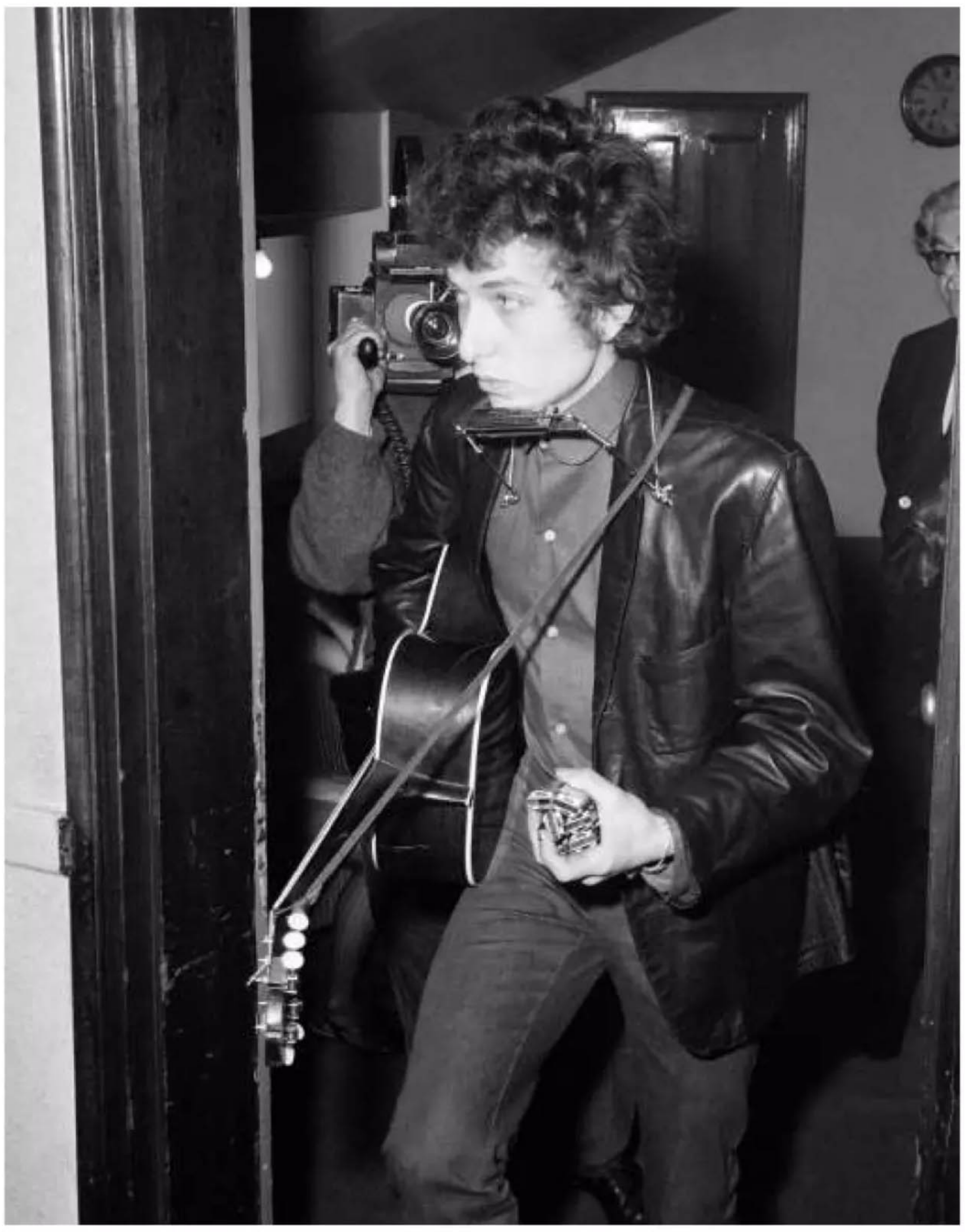
Mirrorpix (2), Mark Hayward

▲FOLK FRIENDS

After arriving at London Airport, Dylan's entourage were whisked by an Austin Princess car to the £70-a-week Savoy Hotel in the city's centre, Bob staying in room 208. The following day, April 27, they did more press. According to Dylan, he had no plans to wed Baez, but "might marry her arm".

▼MOVIE STAR

D.A. Pennebaker followed Dylan's movements with a small film crew, the singer soon "not noticing they were there at all". Here he is being filmed taking the stage at London's Royal Albert Hall, watched by manager Albert Grossman.



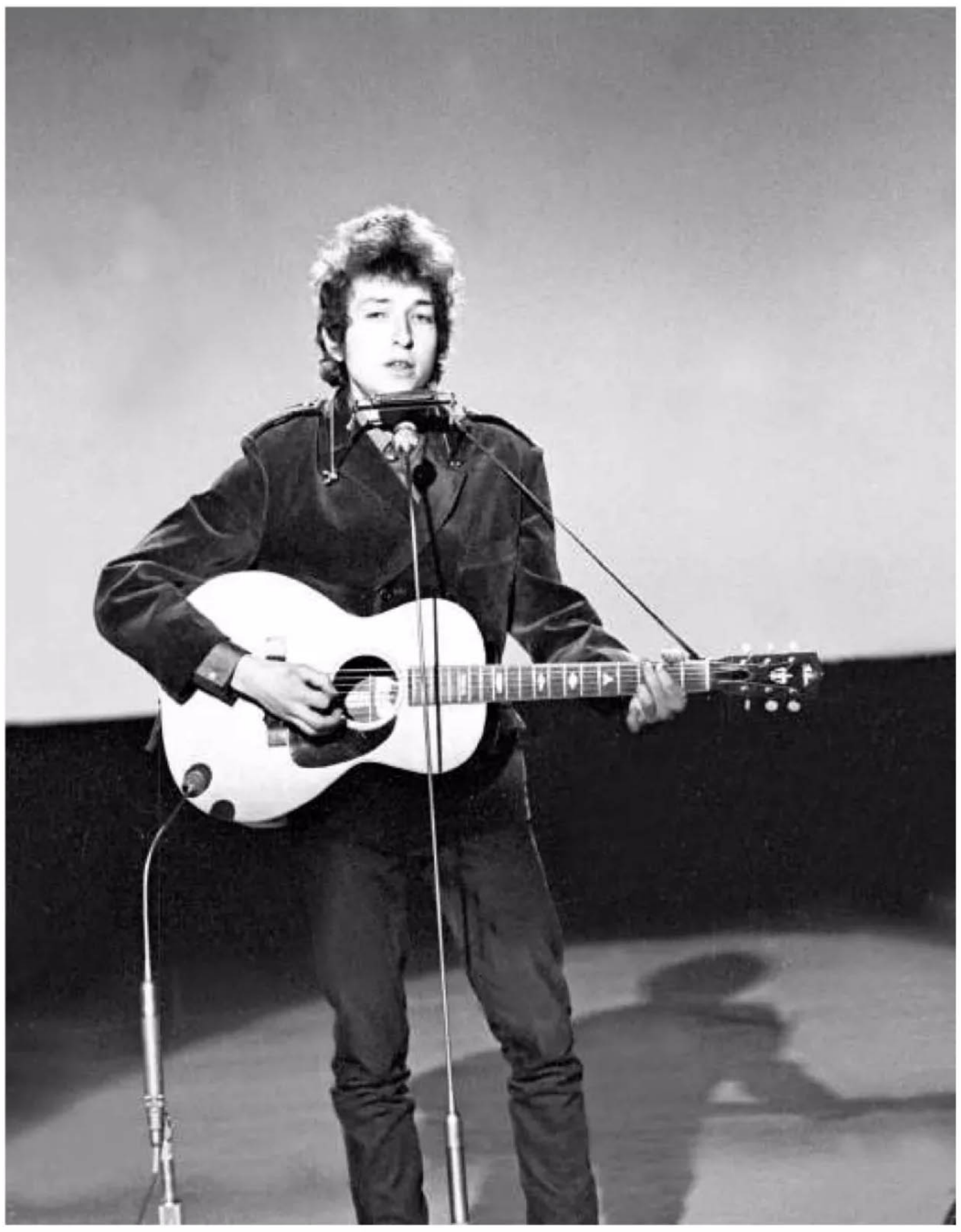
Mirrorpix (3)

BOB MANIA

Another shot from Dylan's early evening arrival at London Airport. The scrum of fans and autograph hunters was so intense that publicist Ken Pitt injured his hand in the melee.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Dylan and Bob Neuwirth pictured in the Savoy Gardens by the Thames Embankment. "Am I folk?" asked Neuwirth, a sometime folk singer. "No, not me. I'm not folk."

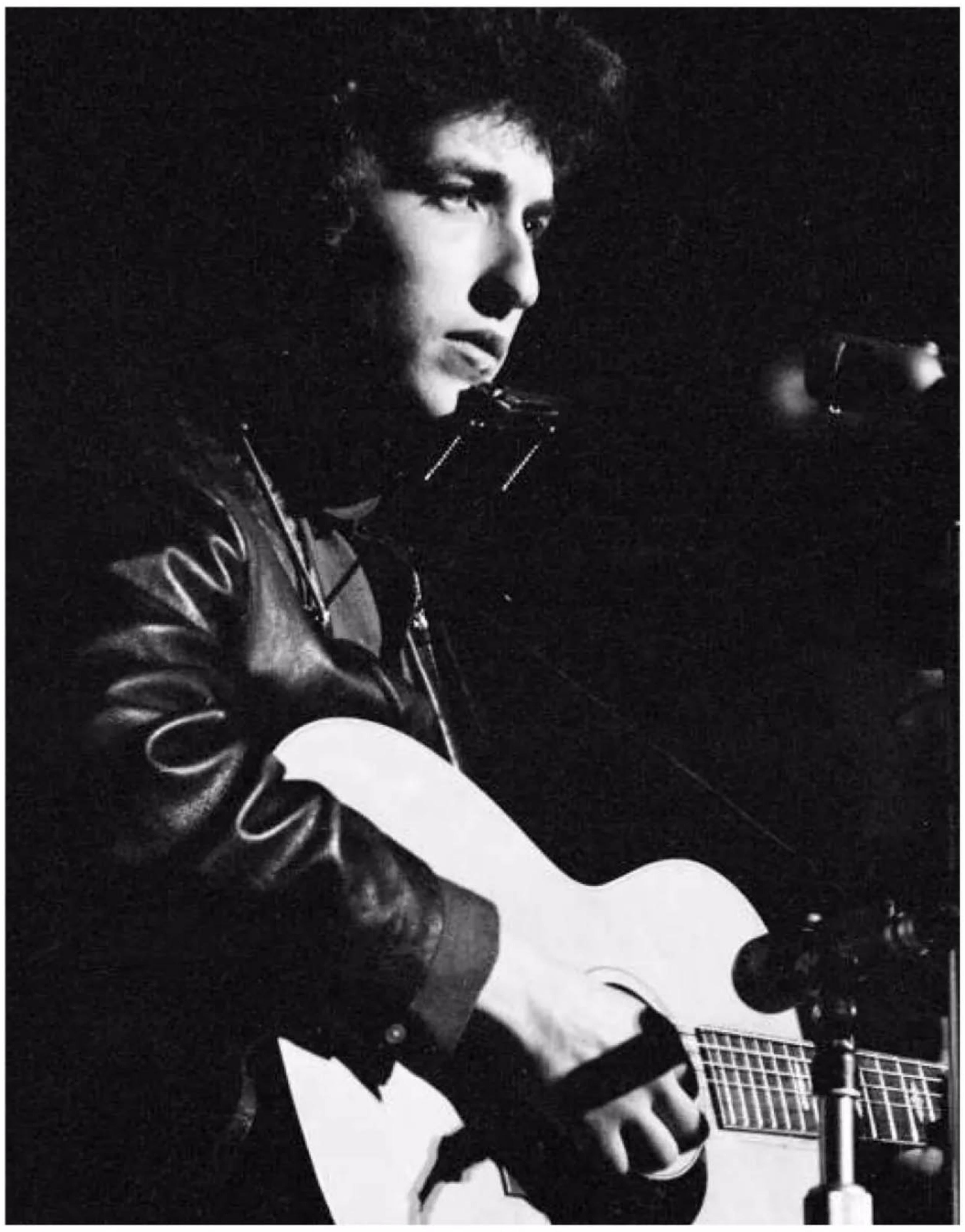


▲STILL UNPLUGGED

Dylan performing on-stage – the tour was his last in the mid '60s to be wholly acoustic. His electrified band made their first public appearance at the Newport Folk Festival in the US two months later in July 1965.

▼ROYAL REBEL

The singer makes the first of two appearances at the Royal Albert Hall on May 9; the following day's show brought the tour to a close. In Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, he summed up his attitude towards fame to a journalist: "Do you think it would bother me one little bit if you didn't like me?"



Mirrorpix (2), BBC Photo Library

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

20 Great '60s US Folk Albums

Bob Dylan's *Bringing It All Back Home*, released in 1965, marked the mid-point in a decade of extraordinary American folk records. On the following pages, Colin Irwin unfolds the story of the '60s US folk scene through 20 essential albums.

LIQUORS
185

20 GREAT '60S US FOLK ALBUMS

JOAN BAEZ
Joan Baez *(VANGUARD, 1960)*

Dubbed "the queen of folk", Baez was – for a while at least – the trailblazer of a new folk song dawn. Her crystalline voice, dusky beauty and principled attitude endeared her instantly to the American college circuit as she rebuffed the overtures of Columbia to release this debut LP on the independent Vanguard label. The traditional songs she performs here, like Silver Dagger, House Of The Rising Sun, Fare Thee Well and the Child Ballads, Mary Hamilton and Henry Martin, swiftly passed into common currency on the scene that her record helped create.

JEAN RITCHIE
Ballads From Her Appalachian Family Tradition *(FOLKWAYS, 1961)*

From the Cumberland mountains of south-east Kentucky, dulcimer-playing Jean Ritchie was – as a precious link to a pristine, unfettered mountain folk tradition – one of the most cherished discoveries of the nascent American folk revival. Cecil Sharp had collected songs from her family in the early part of the century and Ritchie, the youngest of 14 children, became known as "the mother of folk" on the back of the purity with which she played classic ballads like Lord Bateman, Gipsy Laddie and Lord Randall.

CAROLYN HESTER
Carolyn Hester *(COLUMBIA, 1962)*

The album on which Bob Dylan made his debut as a recording artist playing harmonica also established Carolyn Hester as one of the first and most significant stars on the Greenwich Village folk scene. Earlier the same year she'd released another LP, also called *Carolyn Hester*, on the Clancy Brothers' Tradition label, after which John Hammond signed her to Columbia after missing out on Joan Baez. Tracks include intense performances of Once I Had A Sweetheart, Galway Shawl and When Jesus Lived In Galilee.

Peter, Paul & Mary: with Peter Yarrow (left), Paul Stookey and Mary Travers.

DAVE VAN RONK
Folksinger *(PRESTIGE, 1962)*

Van Ronk, "the mayor of MacDougal Street", was the uproarious epicentre of the Greenwich Village coffee house scene, holding court with his huge personality, loud opinions, vast repertoire and encyclopedic knowledge of everything from New Orleans jazz to blues, gospel, ragtime and, of course, folk. With his gruff voice and blues-fuelled guitar, this album – including House Of The Rising Sun, Stackalee and Cocaine Blues – was widely influential and vigorously inspirational among the new breed of singers. It brought him neither fame nor riches, though he was later immortalised in the Coen Brothers movie Inside Llewyn Davis.

PETER, PAUL & MARY
Peter, Paul & Mary *(WARNERS, 1962)*

They were ridiculed by some for their sometimes twee, occasionally frothy nature (Puff The Magic Dragon, co-written by band member Peter Yarrow, will forever be their signature tune for the masses) and the fact that they were individually hand-picked as the acceptable commercial face of folk music (by Dylan's manager Albert Grossman). Yet they played a key role in the popularisation of contemporary folk song in the early '60s. Mary Travers, Noel Paul Stookey and Peter Yarrow had already made an impression as solo performers and were fully committed to the political mindset behind many of the songs here, including Where Have All The Flowers Gone, If I Had A Hammer and Cruel War.

> **"PETER, PAUL & MARY PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN BRINGING FOLK TO POP."**

PETE SEEGER
Broadside Ballads Vol. 2 *(FOLKWAYS, 1963)*

The son of a prominent ethnomusicologist, Pete Seeger was the prime driving force in the movement to re-brand folk song as a potent tool of left-wing politics. Seeger was an exceptional communicator with a great talent for re-shaping old songs for new and controversial political causes, and, having befriended Woody Guthrie, was a key figure on the scene. His covers of Malvina Reynolds' Little Boxes, Peter La Farge's The Ballad Of Ira Hayes, Tom Paxton's The Willing Conscript and three Bob Dylan songs (Fare Thee Well, Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall and Who Killed Davey Moore?) helped usher in a new dawn of political song.

DOC WATSON
The Watson Family *(FOLKWAYS, 1963)*

A collection of field recordings made by Ralph Rinzler and others, this LP not only shone an important light on the natural folk music of a North Carolina farming family, but unveiled the blind Watson as a flatpick and fingerpick guitarist of dazzling skills and versatility. Including tracks as varied as Bonaparte's Retreat, The House Carpenter and Darling Corey, with accompaniments by other members of the family on a variety of instruments, it thrilled the folk scene and, supported by an appearance at that year's Newport Folk Festival, turned Doc Watson into a star.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty, Brian Shuel/Redferns

Eric Von Schmidt (with guitar) and Richard Farina performing at English folkie Bob Davenport's wedding in Chelsea.

ERIC VON SCHMIDT

The Folk Blues Of Eric Von Schmidt *(PRESTIGE, 1963)*

He failed to achieve the heights of many of his contemporaries, but Von Schmidt was a giant of the East Coast folk movement, particularly in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where his broad repertoire of traditional songs, alongside his own material drawing on folk, blues and jazz, made him unofficial king of the coffee bar scene. With back-up by Geoff Muldaur, this important album includes dynamic versions of Jack O'Diamonds, Crow Jane, Buffalo Skinner and Titanic.

HEDY WEST

Volume 2 *(VANGUARD, 1964)*

Using a strange three-finger clawhammer style of guitar and banjo, Hedwig Grace West became one of the darlings of the new American folk movement with her seductive voice and heartfelt delivery. Equally effective on traditional ballads, bluegrass, old-time music and political song, she was also closely connected with folk music tradition through her southern heritage (Georgia) and this, her second record, established her as a leading figure in the new folk revolution with tracks like Fair & Tender Ladies, Boston Burglar and Little Margaret.

"ERIC VON SCHMIDT WAS A GIANT OF THE EAST COAST FOLK SCENE."

TOM PAXTON

Ramblin' Boy *(ELEKTRA, 1964)*

Paxton's arrival as one of the most important figures in the protest song movement was confirmed by this powerful debut studio album. Notably influenced by Pete Seeger, it encapsulates everything that made the folk movement of the day such an important force. It includes topical songs like Daily News, love songs like My Lady's A Wild Flying Dove, children's ➢

Judy Collins surveys the Newport Folk Festival, 1966.

> "JUDY ADDED BRECHT, BREL AND RANDY NEWMAN TO THE FOLK CANON."

< songs like Goin' To The Zoo and the big chorus songs like Last Thing On My Mind, Can't Help Wonder Where I'm Bound and Ramblin' Boy, which became his calling cards.

BOB DYLAN

Bringing It All Back Home *(COLUMBIA, 1965)*

Every record Dylan made in the 1960s was significant. His arrival in New York in 1961 galvanised the Greenwich Village scene, trumpeting a fresh era of protest song, and by 1965 fans and peers awaited his next move with baited breath. Dylan shocked them all by filling one side of the record with electric instruments, belting out Subterranean Homesick Blues and Maggie's Farm with all the fury of a gale-force rock'n'roll band. The acoustic side includes Mr Tambourine Man, while It's All Over Now Baby Blue was widely interpreted as his farewell to folk music. He doth protesteth no more.

PHIL OCHS

I Ain't Marching Any More *(ELEKTRA, 1965)*

"You're not a folk singer, you're a journalist," Bob Dylan disparagingly informed his former comrade-in-arms Phil Ochs, ejecting him from his limousine. Ochs was doomed to remain an outcast, but when it came to sharp, satirical, edgy protest songs, Ochs was at one point considered Dylan's equal. This solo acoustic record shows exactly why. Cleverly barbed missives like Draft Dodger Rag and That Was The President share space with Ewan MacColl's The Ballad Of The Carpenter and a brilliant musical setting of the Alfred Noyes poem The Highwayman.

THE BYRDS

Mr Tambourine Man *(COLUMBIA, 1965)*

Moulding the edginess of Dylan into a populist, rounded form, The Byrds launched the music into the mainstream and effectively gave birth to folk rock. Their jangly treatment of the title track, one of Bob's most enigmatic songs, took the whole ball game to a new dimension and nothing would ever be the same again. The record includes four Dylan covers (Spanish Harlem Incident, All I Really Want To Do and Chimes Of Freedom alongside the title track), plus a Pete Seeger credit (Bells Of Rhymney), while their own material helped lay the foundations for a new dawn of alternative country music. The group were folkies to the core – indeed, in the late '50s frontman Roger McGuinn had attended Chicago's prestigious Old Town School of Folk Music.

20 GREAT ’60S US FOLK ALBUMS

MIMI & RICHARD FARINA

Celebrations For A Grey Day *(VANGUARD, 1965)*

Charismatic and bohemian, Richard Fariña gravitated to the 1960s New York folk scene after dropping out of Cornell University after being suspended for organising student demonstrations. A poet, activist, autoharp player and political songwriter, he briefly married Carolyn Hester, befriended Dylan and ended up marrying Joan Baez’s younger sister Mimi and formed a folk duo with her. Built around Fariña’s melancholy songs, this – the first of only two LPs together – is a thing of great beauty. Everyone thought they were destined to be a major force but in April 1966, shortly after the publication of Fariña’s novel Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me, he was killed in a motorbike crash on Mimi’s 21st birthday.

FRED NEIL

Fred Neil *(CAPITOL, 1966)*

Neil had been around the block a few times before his arrival at the heart of the Greenwich Village folk scene. A staff writer at the Brill Building and songwriter for Buddy Holly and Roy Orbison, he’d performed various styles in different line-ups without any recognised folk credentials. Nevertheless he produced one of the finest records of the era, which went on to create ripples many years later when Harry Nilsson covered one of the tracks, Everybody’s Talkin’, and it became the theme song for the 1969 movie Midnight Cowboy. Neil, though, was long gone, turning his back on music to devote the rest of his life to the preservation of dolphins.

> **“THE HIGH POINT IS NO REGRETS, BUT THIS ALBUM IS AN ORGY OF FOLK CLASSICS.”**

JUDY COLLINS

In My Life *(ELEKTRA, 1966)*

One of the great stalwarts of American folk song, Collins had helped bring to wider attention some of the most important songwriters of the era, including Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Malvina Reynolds and Gordon Lightfoot. Her profile was high and *In My Life* continued the pattern in slightly more ambitious and sophisticated style. Arranger Joshua Rifkin added colour and texture, as she added the music of Bertolt Brecht, Jacques Brel, Randy Newman and The Beatles to the folk canon.

TIM BUCKLEY

Goodbye & Hello *(ELEKTRA, 1967)*

A restless maverick, Buckley was always hard to pigeonhole. Raised on the blues of Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday, he latched on to the folk boom, playing LA coffee houses, was signed to Elektra and formed a folk-rock band. This second LP was a major leap of faith for both Buckley and the label, mixing poetry and song in ambitious fashion. Material like I Never Asked To Be Your Mountain and No Man Can Find The War seemed to penetrate deep into his soul in a way songwriting didn’t tend to do at the time. Buckley died in 1975 from a drug overdose, becoming something of a cult hero – a short career with a tragic ending later mirrored by his son Jeff Buckley.

ARLO GUTHRIE

Alice’s Restaurant *(WARNER BROTHERS, 1967)*

The son of the great American folk pioneer Woody Guthrie, Arlo announced himself as a formidable artist in his own right with the extraordinary title track, an hilarious, revealing 18-minute autobiographical soliloquy detailing the events that led to an arrest for littering which ultimately saved him from the draft. Perfectly hitting the anti-war zeitgeist of the day, the song was later turned into an excellent Arthur Penn film, starring Arlo himself.

TOM RUSH

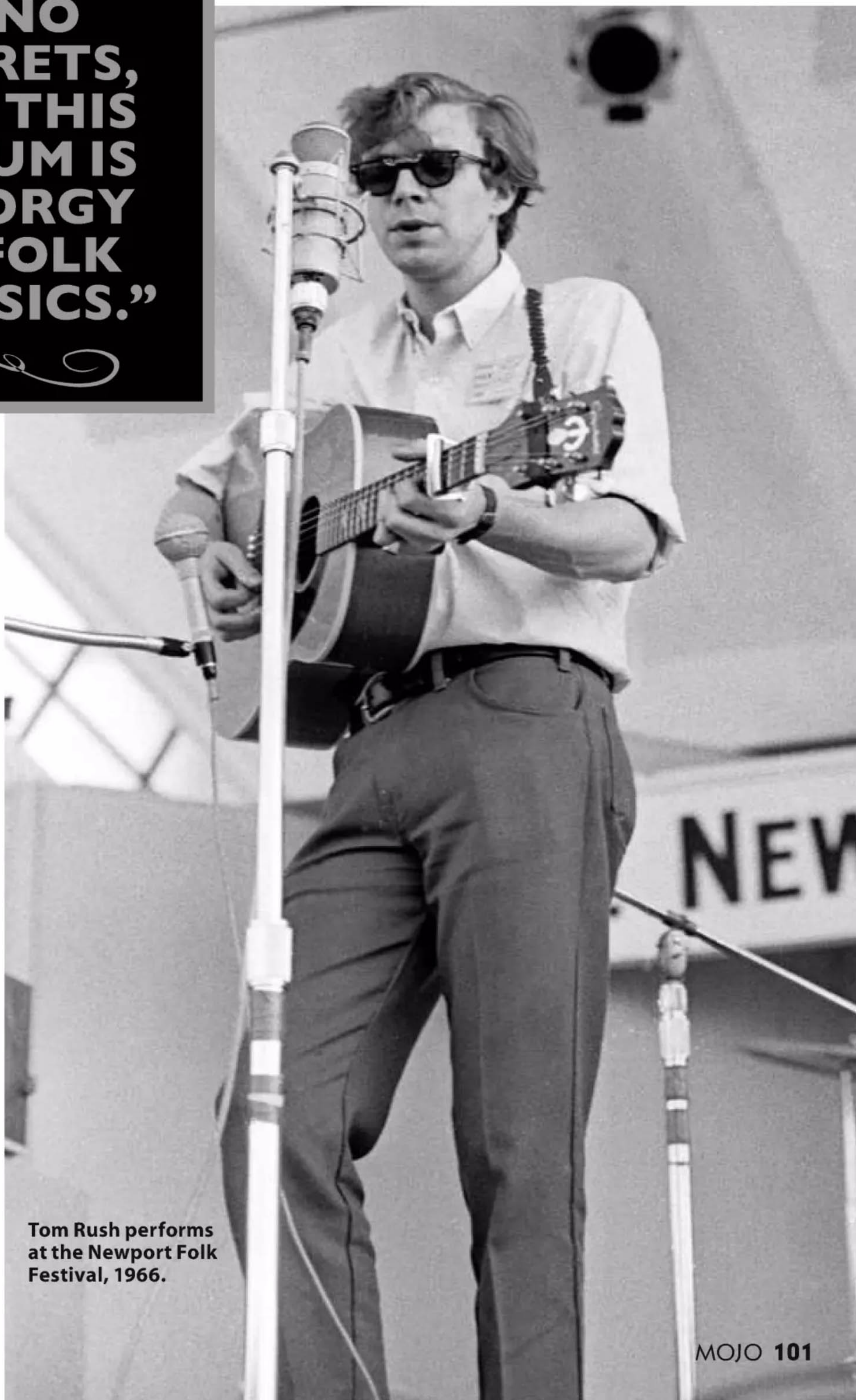
The Circle Game *(ELEKTRA, 1968)*

Rush’s early career was largely built around his performances of traditional ballads from Scotland and Appalachia as he gravitated to the vibrant Cambridge folk scene in Massachussetts. But he had plenty more in the locker as this sixth album comprehensively proves. Its high point is his classic song of loss, No Regrets, later covered by everyone from Emmylou Harris to the Walker Brothers. The rest of the album is an orgy of contemporary folk classics, notably three Joni Mitchell songs, including the title track.

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

Bookends *(COLUMBIA, 1968)*

Paul Simon’s songs – many of them written during his sojourn on the British scene – populate folk music wherever you look. It took Columbia Records’ staff producer Tom Wilson overdubbing their acoustic track The Sound Of Silence with electric instruments without their knowledge or approval to propel them to household name status. The landmark *Bookends* is awash with brilliance; classics here include America, Save The Life Of My Child, Mrs Robinson and Old Friends.



Tom Rush performs at the Newport Folk Festival, 1966.

Corbis, Michael Ochs Images/Getty

Perfect union: Mark Wirtz and then wife, singer Ross Hannaman, 1967.

Phil Smee

TEEN SPIRIT

Brainchild of producer Mark Wirtz and UK psych hopefuls Tomorrow, *A Teenage Opera* should have been a '60s classic. Yet it remains unreleased. By Keiron Tyler.

YOU RARELY HEAR IT ON THE RADIO now but Excerpt From A Teenage Opera was the perfect single for the summer of 1967. The song's central refrain – a children's choir singing "Grocer Jack, Grocer Jack, get off your back, go into town, don't let them down" – was everywhere, hooking the nation into one of the most ambitious British pop records ever. It was a song of lilting fairground melodies, strings, harpsichords, banjos, balalaikas, one that perfectly encapsulated the search for child-like innocence at the core of British psych. Like *Sgt. Pepper*, it was a psychedelic moment that appealed to everyone, hippy or straight, young or old.

Although sung by Keith West, the vocalist and songwriter behind London psych band Tomorrow, Excerpt's true mastermind was Mark Wirtz, an Alsace-born staff producer at EMI. Excerpt From A Teenage Opera should, of course, have heralded the arrival of A Teenage Opera, but while two more singles followed, the full opera didn't. As the grandiose project collapsed, it took everyone with it, ➢

Soap opera: Mark Wirtz (left) and Keith West working on their masterpiece; (far right) Tomorrow in 1966 and below on Danish TV.

≺ killing off promising careers and eventually becoming a very British equivalent of The Beach Boys' *Smile*, a never-to-be-completed work later pieced together fragment-by-fragment by fans searching for one of pop's holy grails. "It had a devastating effect on me," says Mark Wirtz, whose storytelling skills are embellished by strange rococo flourishes that suggest he's been writing this tale in his head since the project ground to a halt in the late '60s.

"The backfire to my unfinished work was so severe that I had to leave England for Hollywood. Perhaps the most hurtful consequence of the entire work's abortion was the withdrawal of industry and media support, believing me to have conned everybody with my promises."

MARK WIRTZ ARRIVED IN ENGLAND FROM GERMANY IN 1962, a square-looking 15 year old with confused dreams of being the next Jerry Lewis. "Germany was hardly the humour capital of the world," he says, "so I picked up a guitar, started to play the piano standing up, moved to England and planned to become a rock idol who'd come to the attention of movie producers, who'd sign me to a deal. I'd let them know I was funny, they'd put me in a comedy, and the rest would be history."

But comedy and film stardom weren't on the immediate agenda. While at art college in Croydon, pianist Wirtz formed a rock'n'roll covers band, The Beatcrackers. One of his compositions, a rinky-dink instrumental called Bubble Pop, so impressed EMI that they signed him to Parlophone in May 1963. "EMI signed me as Mark Rogers And The Marksmen, a replacement for Russ Conway," remembers Wirtz. A cut-rate duplicate of cheery pianist Conway, Wirtz soon began to burrow his way into the business, making records independently, forming a production company called Colinio and leasing tracks to labels. Independent imprint Ember issued his production of Marcus Tro's version of The Rolling Stones' Tell Me in early 1965, followed by his first LP, the instrumental *Latin A Go-Go* (titled *Wirtz And Music* in America). During the production of *Latin A Go-Go* Wirtz recorded an experimental composition as a filler: A Touch Of Velvet, A Sting Of Brass.

"I felt the track had a certain magic," says Wirtz. "When I offered it to EMI, they took it at once and released it as Mood Mosaic." A Touch Of Velvet… later became the theme to Dave Lee Travis's Radio Caroline show. EMI accepted more and more of Wirtz's unique productions. In 1965 they issued Dany Chandelle's Lying Awake – a cataclysmic version of a US obscurity originally by Bernice Swanson, all cascading harpsichords and huge, booming drums. Even better was Peanut's (aka Katie Kissoon) cavernous version of The Beach Boys' I'm Waiting For The Day, Brian Wilson's epic rearranged by tacking on a new intro and even more woodwind instruments.

Although Wirtz's sound was rooted in Phil Spector, there was a central European musical sensibility at its core. He recalls hearing the sound of the balalaika as a child and wanted to exploit its "happy-sad, yet life-celebrating sound". As he built his mountain of sound, Wirtz was sucked into the orbit of US producer, songwriter and jack-of-all-musical-trades, Kim Fowley, a regular UK visitor in the mid '60s. "Kim was taken with my production and arrangement of I'm Waiting For The Day," says Wirtz. "He quickly became my champion and tutor, as much as my hero. I was mesmerised by Kim's flamboyance, unique thinking, reckless courage and utter disregard for music business convention. He personified the ultimate spirit of rock'n'roll."

Fowley's rhetoric fell on receptive ears. "One of Kim's many idiosyncrasies was to preface virtually every noun with the adjective 'teenage'. He'd catch a teenage taxi to a teenage restaurant where he'd order a teenage steak, before making his way to a teenage studio to cut a teenage record. He intended to promote me as his new, imported teenage genius discovery."

Phil Smee

Wirtz's airline ticket to Los Angeles was in his pocket, his suitcases packed, when, three days before departure, EMI offered him a contract to join them as a producer with virtually unlimited creative freedom. So Teenage Mark Wirtz joined EMI as a staff producer. This may have been a mistake.

IN 1967, TOMORROW WERE *THE* HIP LONDON BAND. Singer Keith West, born Keith Hopkins, and bassist John Wood, known as Junior, were veterans of Four Plus One, a north London five-piece firmly in The Rolling Stones' shadow. West flailed his maracas and blew his harmonica like Jagger, while Junior, on rhythm guitar, sported a Brian Jones-style blond bob. After one single, a version of Irma Thomas's Time Is On My Side, they changed their name to the Mod-friendly In Crowd. Their next 45, Otis Redding's That's How Strong My Love Is, almost scraped into the charts. Then, in July 1965, their lead guitarist left. Finding a replacement wasn't hard.

"I'd met Steve Howe a few times in Selmer's [music shop] in Denmark Street," says West. Howe was then in The Syndicats, another north London outfit that had released a couple of manic Joe Meek-produced singles. Howe played on the A-side of The Syndicats' third single, a cover of Ben E. King's On The Horizon, then jumped ship for The In Crowd. "Keith and I got on immediately," says Howe. "The In Crowd were Mods playing soul. Junior went to bass, suddenly we had a rhythm guitarist playing bass. It was great, he could play riffs with me."

"Our sound changed completely when Steve joined," agrees West. "Even if it was a simple song, he'd turn it into something else. It would push me to write."

Another revelation for The In Crowd was the release of The Byrds' Eight Miles High in April 1966. "The Byrds were our Beatles," says Howe. "Eight Miles High had a profound effect. The words, the improvisation – it's stupendous. That's what we wanted to do." The fourth and final piece in the Tomorrow jigsaw came in mid 1966 when drummer Twink joined from The Fairies, deranged, Pretty Things-esque R&Bers from Colchester. "Keith said, 'How about if we stop playing cover versions?'" remembers Howe. "We dumped our soul-boy image and started to shop at [hippy boutique] Granny Takes A Trip."

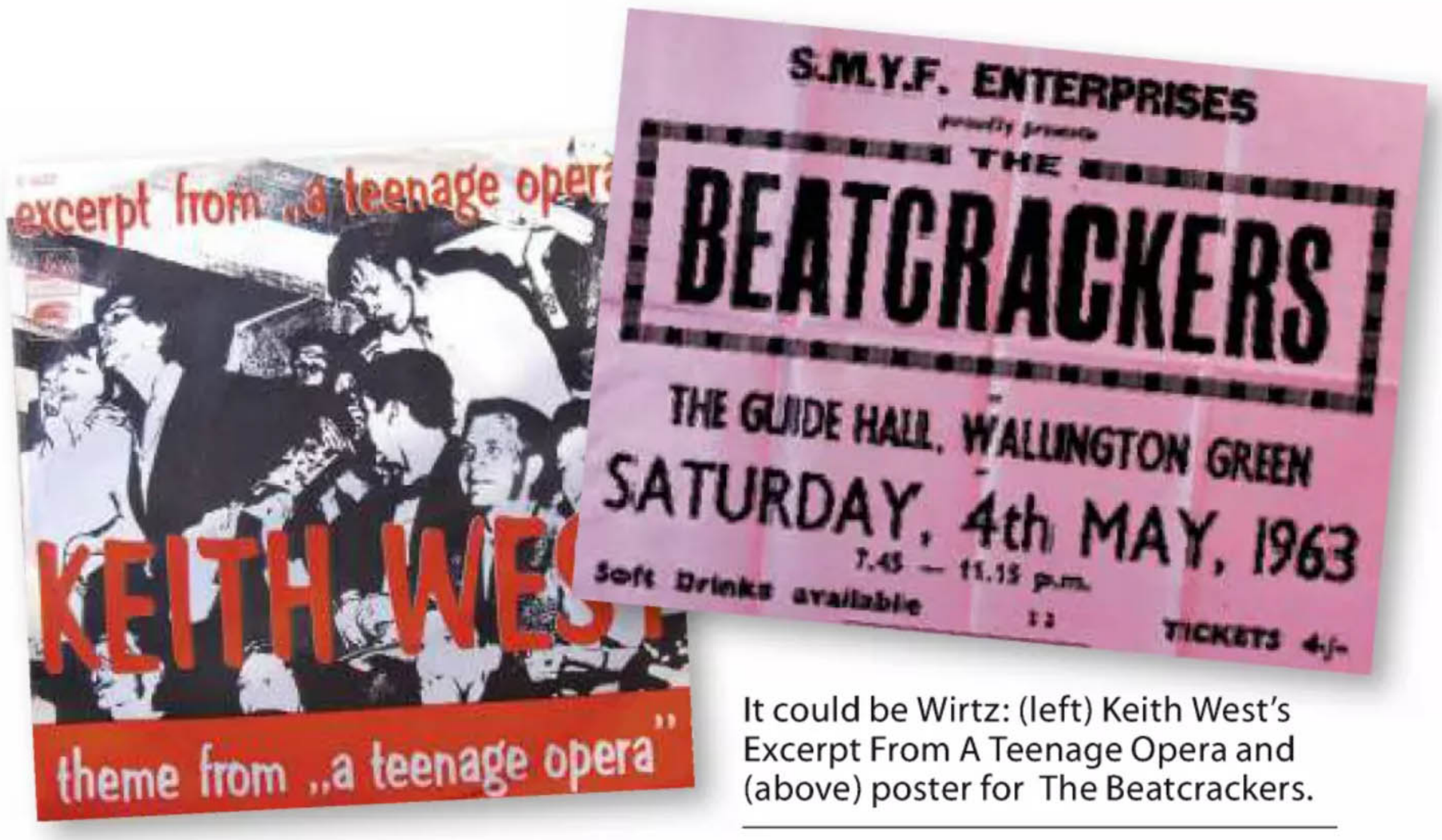
The In Crowd got a chance to show off their new sound and style in September 1966 when they were asked to appear in Michelangelo Antonioni's Swinging London mystery flick, Blow-Up. "David Hemmings and the crew came down to this club called Tiles and they loved it," remembers West. "They really wanted The Who, who weren't available. Antonioni gave me [The Animals'] We Gotta Get Out Of This Place. He wanted something like that."

The two songs West wrote for Antonioni were Blow-Up and Am I Glad To See You, muzzy, fuzzy psychedelic prototypes for the Tomorrow sound to come. But when Blow-Up hit cinemas, The Yardbirds were the band seen playing in the mock-up of Windsor's Ricky Tick Club, not The In Crowd. How was Keith West to know that The Yardbirds' manager, Simon Napier-Bell, had got wind of the film and invited Antonioni along to a Yardbirds show at the Albert Hall?

The In Crowd kept working and writing, coming up with a new song, My White Bicycle, written by West with his old school friend Ken Burgess. The inspiration came from The Provos, a radical group of Dutch libertarians, who provided free transport in Amsterdam. "We were in Holland and there were thousands of white cycles lying all over the place," says West. "They were free – hop on and ride, leave it and someone else uses it."

Luckily for The In Crowd, their EMI demo was heard by a staff producer Steve Howe knew. "Steve was supplementing his income doing session work for Mark Wirtz," says West. "He heard My White Bicycle and was convinced it was going to be a hit." But first, The In Crowd needed a name change.

"I SEE THE ARRANGEMENTS IN MY HEAD, LIKE A MOVIE. THEN I BUILD THE PICTURE IN THE STUDIO."



It could be Wirtz: (left) Keith West's Excerpt From A Teenage Opera and (above) poster for The Beatcrackers.

It was March 1967. "I remember rehearsing one afternoon and Junior, the bass player, came up with Tomorrow and we all went, YES! New music, tomorrow's music. We played UFO a couple of times and they loved us. The first time I went to any of those clubs I saw Pink Floyd, they had the oil lights, white sheets and people sitting around smoking joints. We couldn't believe it because we'd been smoking cannabis since we'd started The In Crowd. You wake up without a hangover the next morning – the ideal drug for a band."

In Wirtz, Tomorrow had found an EMI producer who'd try anything. In the knitted-tie world of EMI, Wirtz was an anomaly. "He was a breath of fresh air," says Geoff Emerick, the EMI engineer who collaborated with Wirtz and became famous for his Beatles work. "There was a stiffness about EMI. It was such a fuddy-duddy organisation. We all had to wear suits and ties, polish our shoes. We were given permission to take our jackets off during evening sessions."

A new version of My White Bicycle was issued in May 1967. Steve Howe's choppy guitar underpinned the droning, almost Eastern choruses, the lyrical whimsy tempered by the power of the performance. Although undeniably psychedelic, this was still pop. It wasn't a hit.

In the meantime, Wirtz was beginning to imagine a new type of music, a story in sound. "I see and hear the arrangement in my head, like a movie," he explains. "Then I construct the picture in the studio, building it like a mosaic. I had a dream, a real dream in my sleep, about an ageing door-to-door grocer named Jack in a small, turn-of-the-century village, who was mocked by the children as he was taken for granted by the town folk. When Jack unexpectedly died, the town folk reacted with anger about the inconvenience of having to be self-reliant about their staple provisions, while the children were heartbroken, in truth having loved and appreciated Jack all the while."

This, believed Wirtz, had to become a movie on record. But as a producer he was saddled with working on EMI-sanctioned projects with limited budgets. So in April and May he secretly began piecing together the soundtrack of the dream at the end of sessions.

Geoff Emerick: "It was recorded out of sequence. It was segmented and we didn't know how to link bits. It was only when we started splicing together that the realisation of what we had began to emerge."

"Mark approached me to write the words for this backing track," remembers West. "It was all odd bits of mandolin, no choir, the orchestration hadn't been done. It wasn't my type of music, but when it flowed along it reminded me of *Pet Sounds*. I went up to his flat, he left me there for two or three hours. When he came back I'd done a good two-thirds of the lyric and he said he'd like to feature this name in the song, Grocer Jack. I thought I was doing a job, writing a lyric and that would be the end of it."

Steve Howe was brought in to add guitar, speeded up to mimic a mandolin. Other session musicians included guitarist Big Jim Sullivan (on banjo), backing vocalists The Ivy League (soon to become The Flowerpot Men) and drummer Clem Cattini. The lilting Clavioline intro was recorded. Strings were added. Brass was layered on. As ➢

Colour me psych: Wirtz and Hannaman in High '60s reverie; (right) Keith West does flower-power.

≺ the backing track grew and grew it was clear a vocalist had to be found. "They took me in to do a demo late one night," says West. "I noticed there were some session singers there. Being naive, I thought, I'll just do this job then they'll get someone else in. There was talk of Cliff Richard. They thought my vocal suited the song, so I was asked if it was OK. I thought no more of it."

"THE DAM OF SILENCE BURST AND RELEASED A TORRENT OF CONDEMNATION."

The record was crowned with a chorus of children from Hammersmith's Corona stage school, with a girl called Charmaine taking the lead. "There was just no way I could hide the expense of the children's fees in official session paperwork," says Wirtz. "I made a deal with Corona and paid for the kids out of my own pocket. Best money I ever spent."

Aware that the project's heavily orchestrated concept would be regarded as uncool, Wirtz needed a performer whose image was hip. West fitted the bill. "He looked and acted like a hippy, without being so far out that he might have put off the more mature audience," explains Wirtz, "but he had established himself as a cult icon in the underground community and would validate Grocer Jack as a bona fide rock record."

When the song was finished, Wirtz recalled Kim Fowley's teenage buzzword. Grocer Jack quickly became Excerpt From A Teenage Opera. "That way," says Wirtz, "if the single was a hit, people would want an LP of the whole opera." But first, he had to come clean with EMI and admit to abusing the company's time. Wirtz decided to play the completed song to EMI's bigwigs. "Mark's bosses came from Manchester Square," says Emerick. "They didn't know what they were listening to. There was silence afterwards."

Wirtz: "The dam of silence burst and released a torrent of condemnation. 'Absurd record.' 'Four minutes long!' 'Classical music merged with rock.' 'Have you gone mad?' 'You think anybody is going to buy a rock record with children on it?' The committee's unanimous verdict was final – can the tape and kill the project." It could have been worse. At least he wasn't sacked on the spot.

"That would have been the end of it, had it not been for John Peel," continues Wirtz. "I played him an acetate of Excerpt [at Radio Caroline]. Before the recording had even reached its ending, John, with a big grin on his face, opened up the microphone, promised the listeners a marvellous surprise, then put the needle back to the beginning and played the record over the air. Radio Caroline's phones lit up like a Christmas tree from listeners calling in to request the record be played again. And again. EMI had no choice but to rush-release it."

Phil Smee

Excerpt From A Teenage Opera entered the Top 40 in the second week of August 1967. Seven weeks later it was Number 2, kept from the top spot by Engelbert Humperdinck's Last Waltz. "It was selling bucket-loads," recalls West. "I thought it would go away; it didn't."

In September, while Excerpt… was climbing the charts, Tomorrow released their second single, Revolution. In little over three minutes they captured the raging spirit of psychedelia. It didn't chart. As far as the record-buying public were concerned, Keith West and Tomorrow just weren't the same thing. Worse still, their record label seemed to share this view. "EMI were probably thinking, 'Let's bury Revolution and get on with Keith West,'" he says. "I tried to get a meeting with the MD. I went up to his office in the penthouse. He was sitting there watching cricket on TV and wasn't interested in a word I had to say. It was complete joke."

As Excerpt… continued to sell, press interest in the Teenage Opera magnified, and became ever-more overblown. There were reports of a film, a double album. Cliff Richard might star in the movie. Disc And Music Echo said the whole score was going to be recorded in October. "I went along with the hype," says West.

Playing to their underground fanbase, Tomorrow were also drawing mainstream crowds attracted by the name Keith West, added to posters by canny promoters. "We did play some gigs where they weren't so keen on psychedelia," says Howe. "If anything we became more radical. Junior didn't think anything of putting his bass down with a note ringing like hell. He'd sometimes only be dressed in a loin cloth. We had this girl called Suzy Creamcheese who did a few shows. She and Junior used to act out something spontaneously: making love, tragedies, hitting each other."

And they had to perform Excerpt… "A three-piece trying to get through that song is laughable," says West.

Unconcerned with Tomorrow's problems, Wirtz ploughed on with the next piece of Teenage Opera, entitled Sam. "Sam's success," explains Wirtz, "would either vindicate the Teenage Opera as a viable, credible work of importance or, in its failure, condemn it to oblivion."

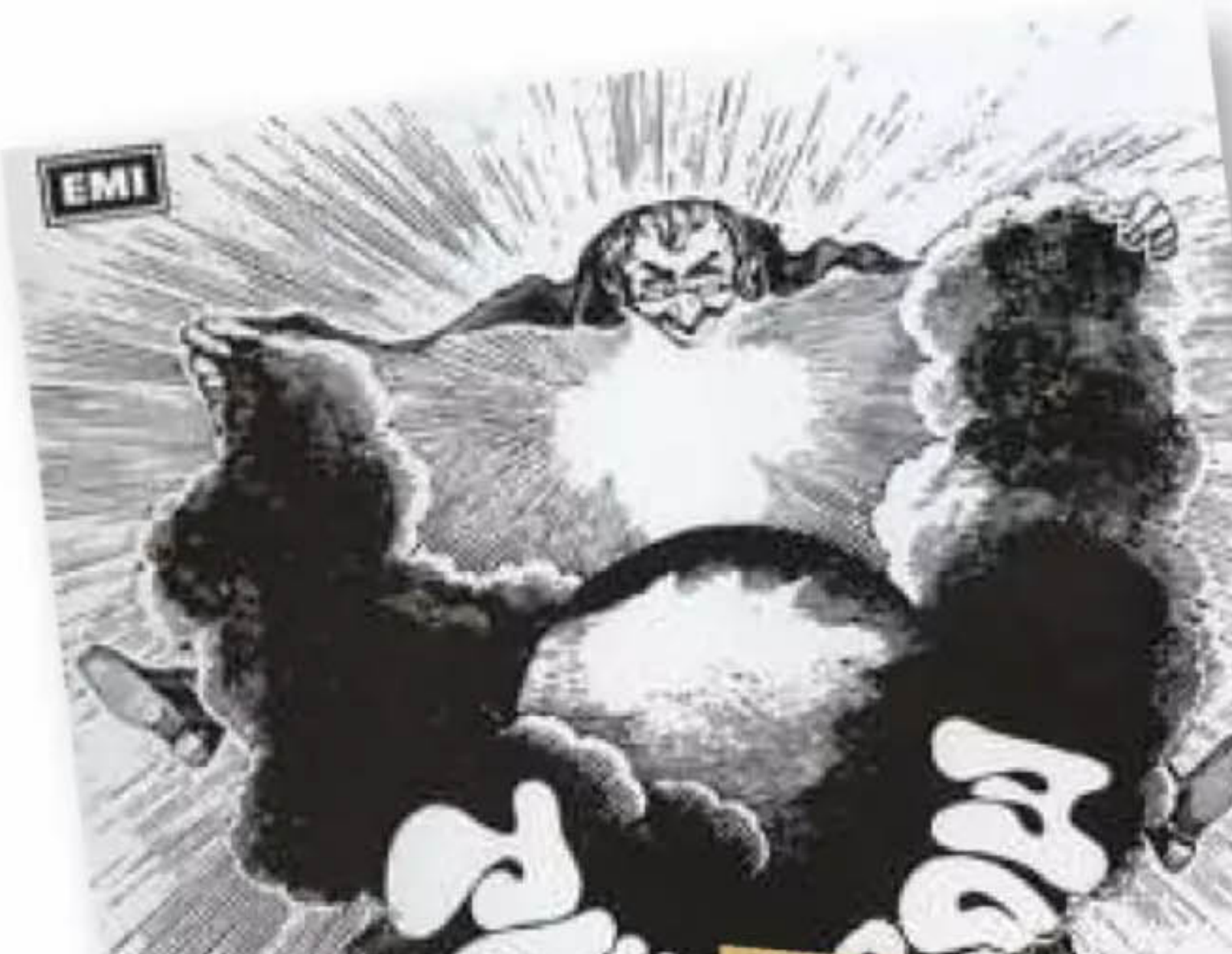
West: "We had a lot of fun making Sam. I thought it was going in the right direction, until Mark's ego got out of control. He was trying to do a four- or five-minute single. The competition in the charts was so fierce in those days, Hendrix and the Small Faces. Three-minute records. I thought, How are we going to get this thing played?"

Wirtz: "Sam was presented to the industry and press in a studio premiere. Abbey Road's Studio 3 was packed with people. The air sizzled with electricity and when the moment arrived, it became the spectacular highlight of A Teenage Opera's life. In contrast to Grocer Jack's private little premiere, Sam was greeted with breathless applause and hailed as brilliant and sensational."

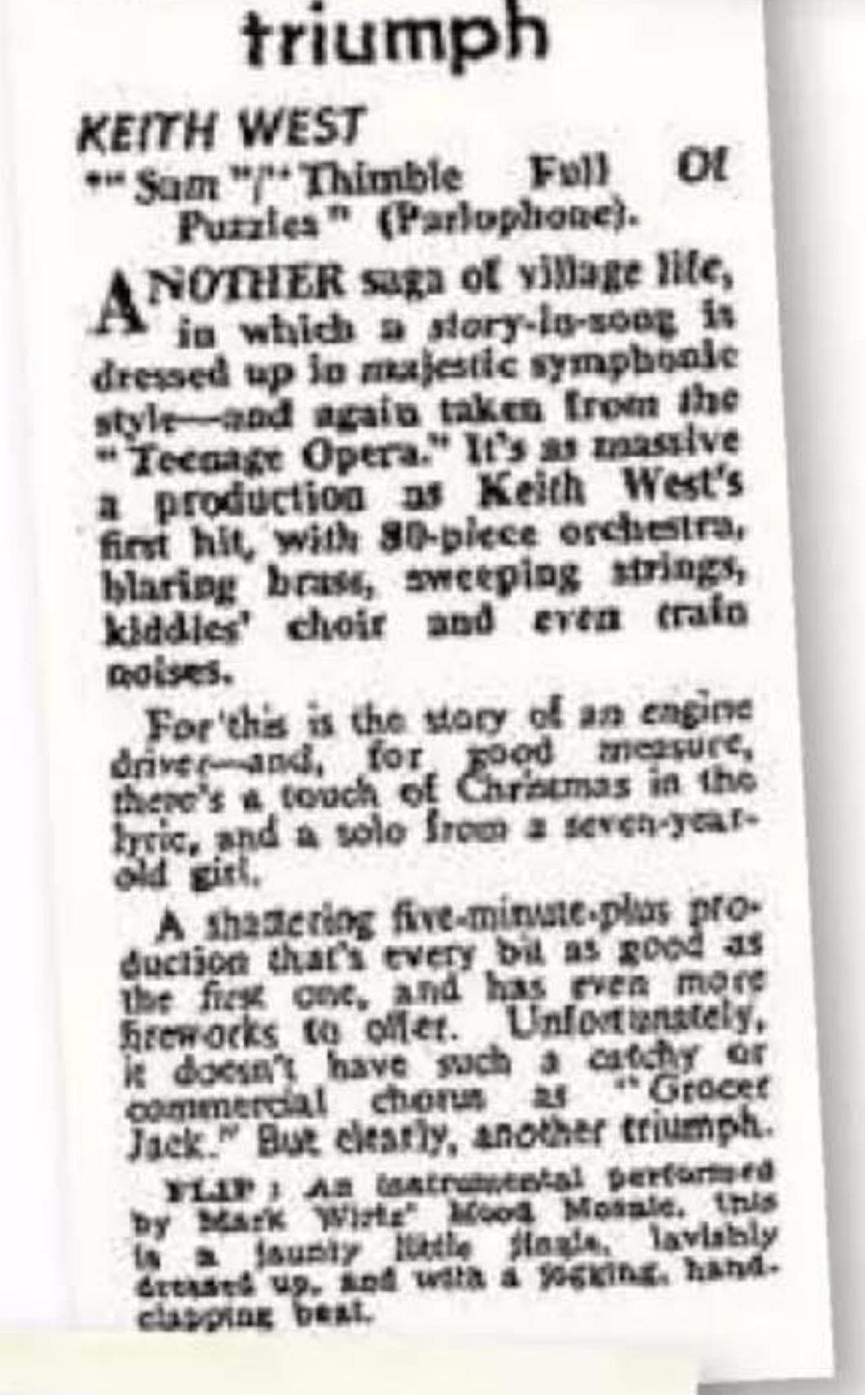
But West's misgivings turned out to be well founded. "The BBC hardly played it," continues Wirtz. "Even though enough people heard and bought the single to make it a hit, the sales figures paled in comparison to Grocer Jack. Hunger for the complete work remained as vital as ever, raising the question, when will the Teenage Opera come out?"

In an attempt to capture some airplay, an edit of Sam was hastily despatched to radio stations. It was too late. After a week at Number 38 at the end of November, Sam vanished from the charts. Following three months on the charts Excerpt… had left the Top 40 only two weeks earlier. A Teenage Opera had stalled.

Howe: "EMI said to Mark, 'You can't possibly make an album as lavish as this.' Mark couldn't compromise his grandiose idea."



KEITH WEST
SAM
FROM "A TEENAGE OPERA"
Thimble full of puzzles
MARK WIRTZ' MOOD MOSAIC



Another Opera triumph

KEITH WEST

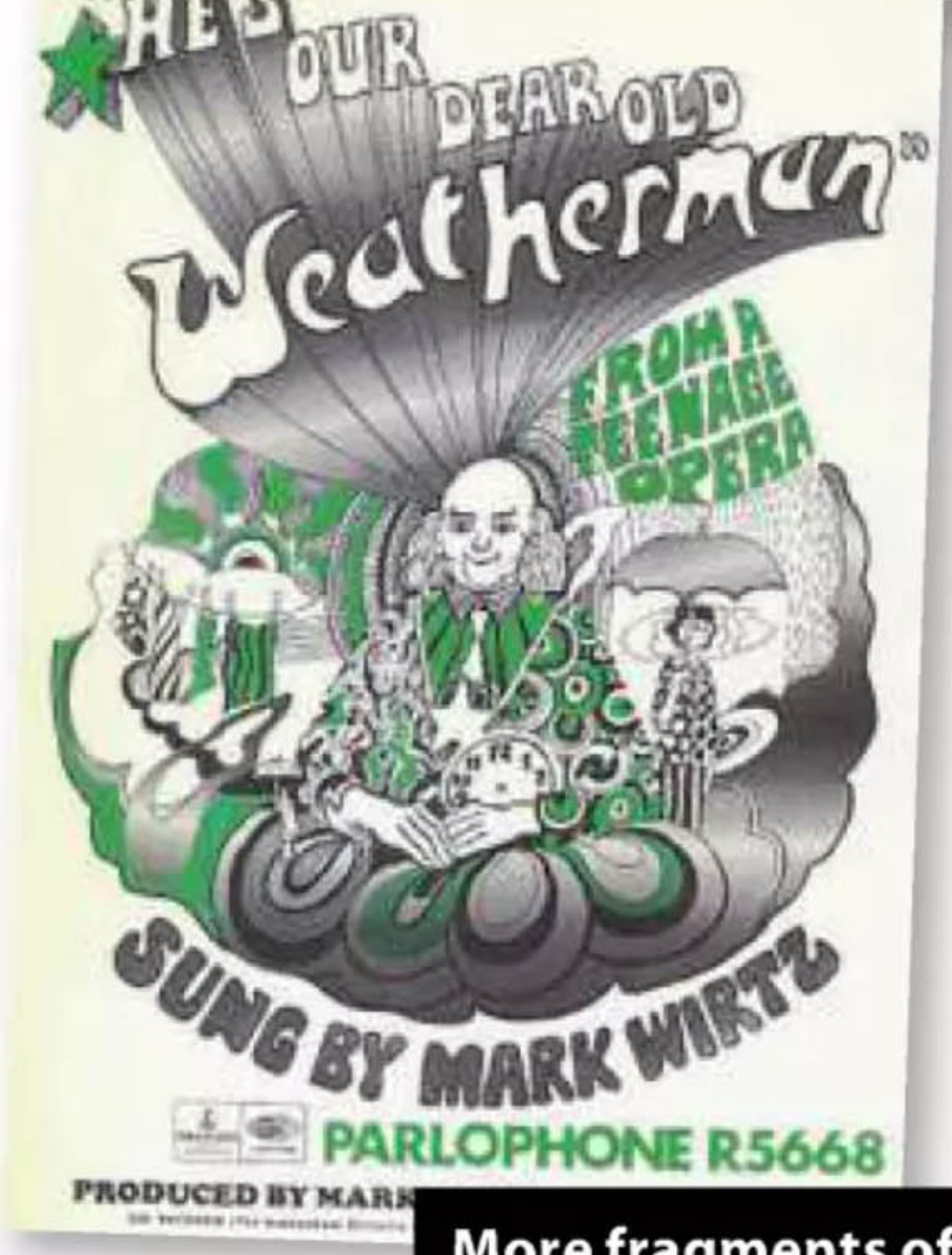
** "Sam"/"Thimble Full Of Puzzles" (Parlophone).

ANOTHER saga of village life, in which a *story-in-song* is dressed up in *majestic* symphonic style—and again taken from the "Teenage Opera." It's as massive a production as Keith West's first hit, with 80-piece orchestra, blaring brass, sweeping strings, kiddies' choir and even train noises.

For this is the story of an engine driver—and, for good measure, there's a touch of Christmas in the lyric, and a solo from a seven-year-old girl.

A shattering five-minute-plus production that's every bit as good as the first one, and has even more fireworks to offer. Unfortunately, it doesn't have such a catchy or commercial chorus as "Grocer Jack." But clearly, another triumph.

FLIP: An instrumental performed by Mark Wirtz' Mood Mosaic, this is a jaunty little single, lavishly dressed up, and with a jogging, hand-clapping beat.



More fragments of A Teenage Opera: a glowing review of Sam and the Wirtz-sung …Weatherman.

BY THE END OF 1967 TOMORROW APPEARED TO be stuck in the same limbo as a teenage opera. They'd recorded an album for EMI, but it remained unreleased. The band were fragmenting. "Sam comes out [and] leaves Tomorrow stuck in the middle of nowhere," says West. "The gigs were drying up as well. The psychedelic era was coming to an end."

"At the end of the year Keith and I went to Jamaica," recalls Howe. "We came back and everything was different. There were two camps in the group. Keith and I, Junior and Twink."

Immediately after Howe and West's return from Jamaica, Tomorrow played the Christmas On Earth Revisited Festival at Kensington's Olympia on December 22. Although a triumphant show, for West it was the beginning of the end for Tomorrow. "Steve and I were convinced we should move away from Twink and Junior because there were too many shenanigans going on [on-stage]," explains West. "It was getting into a circus. I thought, This band is falling apart in front of the audience. It got very sloppy near the end."

West was also not interested in pursuing any more Teenage Opera diversions. "I'd done Sam, which was pretty good. Then after that the rest of the material wasn't really up to standard – so I passed."

Wirtz had no such reservations and tried his luck by singing the third and final Teenage Opera single, issued in February 1968. He's Our Dear Old Weatherman was an amazing battle between harpsichords, kettle drums and a kids' choir, topped with a cascading melody and choppy rhythms. "The BBC gave it minimal airplay," says Wirtz. "The people who heard Weatherman loved it and bought it. Alas, there weren't enough of them. More damagingly, there was a general apathy about the Teenage Opera. People had grown tired of being teased with bits and pieces. In the sales eyes of EMI, Weatherman had failed, the Teenage Opera was dead."

That February EMI eventually released Tomorrow's album – completed the previous October. Cutting the band loose, the label took little trouble with the packaging, a black-and-white pen-and-ink illustration depicting a mustachioed cartoon Victorian gent conducting the weather – not really in sync with one of the most colourful London psychedelic bands. "A friend of Mark Wirtz did the cover," says West. "It was all done behind our backs. Looks like something out of Punch magazine – we hated it."

From the fluid, slippery, Quicksilver Messenger Service-like Now Your Time Has Come to punchy character-based songs such as Auntie Mary's Dress Shop (about Granny Takes A Trip) and Three Jolly Little Dwarves (inspired by a Keith West acid trip) the album was a triumphant showcase for an undeniably great band. But it was too late. Tomorrow split in April 1968. EMI issued a Keith West solo single and Steve Howe then formed Bodast and went on to join Yes in 1970. Twink and Junior released a single on EMI as The Aquarian Age. Twink joined The Pretty Things in time to appear on their 1968 narrative-based concept-album *S.F. Sorrow*. He later turned up in The Pink Fairies. A Teenage Opera had dealt Tomorrow a fatal blow.

"It didn't cause any problems at the time," says West. "But the Teenage Opera put the spanner in the works."

Mark Wirtz felt that he was left high and dry by the Teenage Opera experience: "A few months later, trapped in a vicious circle of formula productions, I asked EMI for a release from my contract. They agreed on the condition that I forfeited all royalties from any recordings that I'd produced for them. I was up against the wall with my career in limbo, and freedom appeared worth the price."

Wirtz went on to write and produce for Page One and Chapter 1 Records, and moved to Los Angeles in 1971 to carve a career in production. He later released three albums under his own name: *Balloon*, *Hothouse Smiles* and *Lost Pets* (followed up in 2011 with *Lost Pets 2*). Then, in the early 2000s, he finally returned to his dream of completing A Teenage Opera. "I finally exorcised the haunting which had cursed me for three decades. I spent nine months of day-and-night work composing and recording the complete Teenage Opera. I created a full dramatic story and script – a romantic fantasy revolving around H.G. Wells' abduction into the future by a villainous time master."

Explaining that H.G. Wells's father was a door-to-door grocer, Wirtz continues. "When villainous time master Bahb Tibicen appears [he] seduces Jack into joining a group of other unwitting captives on a journey to a future Shangri La, which turns out to be a world of hellish nightmares. Naturally, there is a love story in there, too."

Looking back to the original Teenage Opera, Keith West feels it's best if the whole experience remains in the past. As he says, "It put a spanner in the works for Tomorrow and helped kill the band off." The regular requests to sing Grocer Jack at nostalgia shows are always turned down. It's not something he wishes to dwell on.

The completed Teenage Opera, explains Wirtz, now exists as a double CD called *Tempo*. And while it's unlikely that *Tempo* will ever end up in your local HMV, or even see the light of day, for Mark Wirtz at least the spectre of A Teenage Opera has finally been laid to rest. Ⓜ

Thanks to everyone who took the time to be interviewed, and also to Jeff Dexter, Jim Halley, Joni Hollar, Mark Stratford and Harvey Williams.

Coltrane ascending: at the Half Note club, May 7, 1965.

Getty

The Seeker

For 15 years **John Coltrane** was on a relentless quest to find a new sound and inner peace. Defying his critics, he created a new musical language whose ultimate expression manifested on one timeless album that changed everything... *A Love Supreme*. **Words: Phil Alexander**.

Strictly for the Bird: (from left) Tommy Potter, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Coltrane at Birdland, the club named after Parker, in 1951.

IN FEBRUARY 1965 AN INTERVIEW with The Beatles appeared in Playboy magazine, conducted by well-known humourist, raconteur, actor and radio presenter Jean 'Shep' Shepherd.

"Do you enjoy jazz, any of you?" asked Shepherd, midway through a garbled conversation.

"[Stan] Getz," replied John Lennon. "But only because somebody gave me an album of his… with him and somebody called Iguana, or something like that."

It was a flippant answer to what seemed like a facile question buried among a slew of prompts about the Royal Family, "the homosexual problem" ("We're all homosexuals!" said George Harrison) and a discussion centred around the fact that The Beatles had been compared to Adolf Hitler by members of the conservative press.

In fact, the question stemmed from Shepherd's own interest in jazz. Through his wide-ranging gigs on radio, TV and as a writer, the Chicago-born 'Shep' was a link-man between the Beats and the burgeoning New York jazz movement. He narrated the title track of bass player Charles Mingus's 1957 improvised masterpiece, *The Clown*. He'd hosted a series of nights entitled Jazz With John Shepherd; one show in particular, on April 5, 1958, at the Town Hall on West 43rd Street, New York, was headlined by trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. Lowest placed on the press advert for the show was saxophonist John Coltrane, then 31.

By 1965, Coltrane had come a long way in the seven years since that show. He had found his own voice, and was at the cutting edge of his chosen genre, pushing the boundaries in terms of both sound and technique. And yet even The Beatles – the avatars of popular culture who would do so much to transform quotidian attitudes in the ensuing two years – appeared oblivious to the revolutionary current rushing through jazz. Indeed, Lennon's citing of Stan Getz and "somebody called Iguana" – presumably a comment on recently released bossa nova hit The Girl From Ipanema – seemed to reinforce a divergence in the mid-'60s jazz world. On the one hand, jazz had been assimilated into the pop world as light entertainment, while on the other it became the sound of intellectualised unrest, civil rights and high consciousness.

Coltrane had already paid his dues as a crowd-pleaser. Now, in that same February month, the greatest manifestation of his power had just emerged on the Impulse! label. His 18th album since his solo debut in '57, *A Love Supreme* hit the racks on February 9. It was a record that would travel far beyond the confines of the genre.

Rex, Magnum

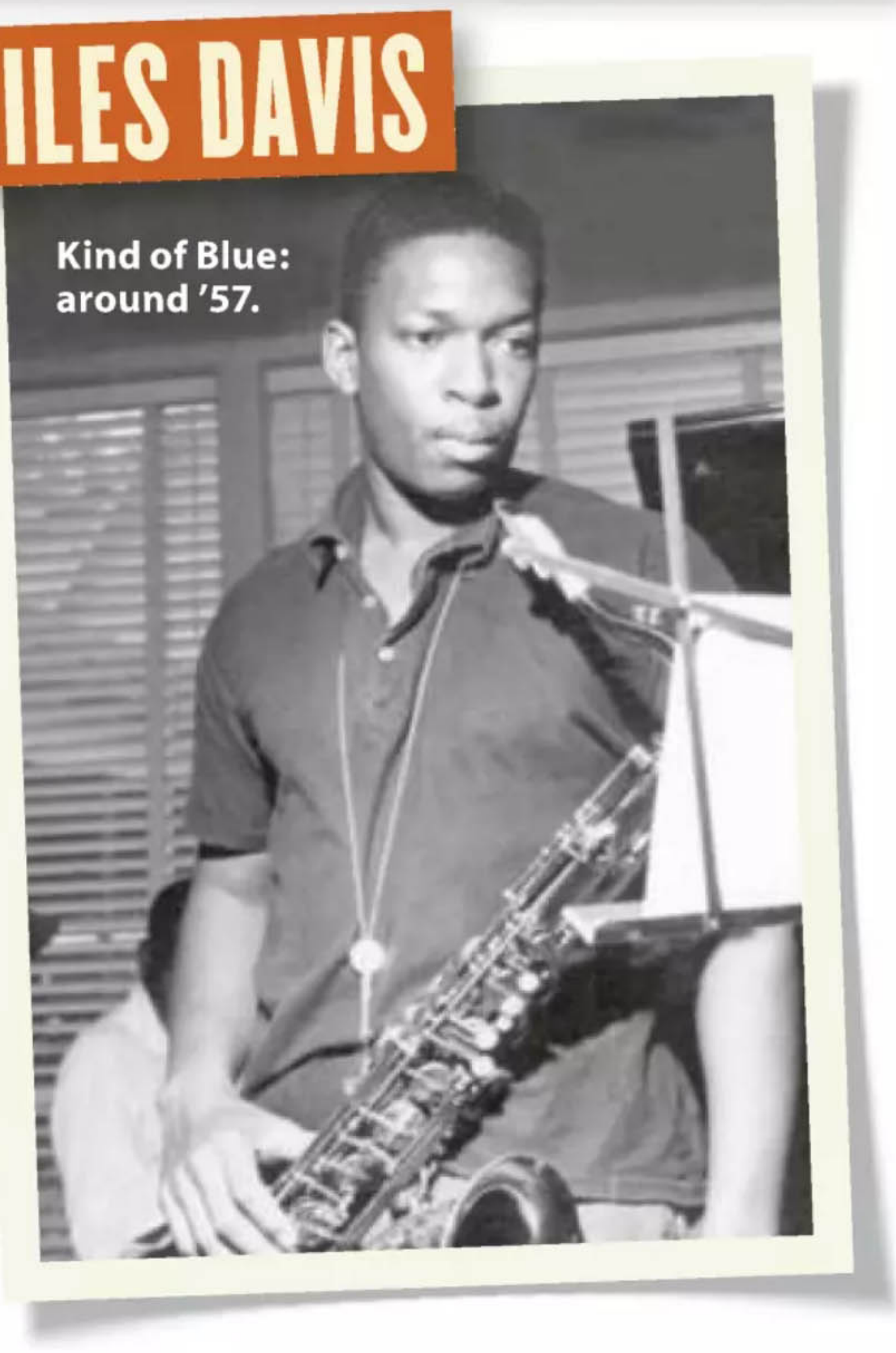
Buried treasure: with The Thelonious Monk Quartet at the Five Spot Cafe, c.1957 – a Carnegie Hall concert from the same period lay unbroadcast and unreleased for almost 50 years.

> “THE MUSIC WE WERE PLAYING WAS JUST UNBELIEVABLE. IT USED TO SEND CHILLS THROUGH ME.”
>
> MILES DAVIS

JOHN COLTRANE BOUGHT HIS first alto saxophone in September 1943. He was 17 years old and had recently moved from North Carolina to Philadelphia with his mother, following his father’s death. America was nearly two years into World War II and faced new realities in the conflict. Musically speaking, too, a change could be felt, with jazz moving away from its swing roots into areas of improvisation that defined the bebop movement. This shift was not instant, with a number of emerging stars – Gillespie and saxophonist Charlie ‘Bird’ Parker – struggling to break out of the big-band gigs that paid their wages. In fact, both Parker and Gillespie – both then in pianist Earl Hines’s band – would exert a distinct influence on Coltrane: Parker as someone whose melodic lines and fluid style Coltrane chose to emulate, after seeing him live for the first time in June 1945; Gillespie as a band leader whose own big band Coltrane would join in 1949 following stints with Jimmy Heath and Eddie ‘Cleanhead’ Vinson.

“I was first awakened to musical exploration by Dizzy Gillespie and Bird,” Coltrane told Down Beat magazine in 1960. “It was through their work that I began to learn about musical structures and the more theoretical aspects of music.”

Coltrane absorbed musical theory at speed, but he later said that he also played by rote in those early days. “What I didn’t know was what I had to do is really express myself,” he said, reflecting on his time as a young player whose priority was to solicit applause from nightclub audiences. It was a generic approach to making music that changed slightly when Gillespie’s big band slimmed down to a smaller ensemble, giving greater voice to individual playing.



Kind of Blue: around ’57.

1955 proved to be a turning point for Coltrane. In the same year that his idol Charlie Parker died, Coltrane joined Miles Davis’s emerging band (later dubbed the trumpeter’s first ‘great quintet’). Far from being a star in his own right, Coltrane he had sat in with Miles previously and his reputation as a forceful player was growing. With Philly Joe Jones (drums), Paul Chambers (bass) and pianist Red Garland, Coltrane contributed to the five-piece’s unique dynamic, which gelled remarkably quickly.

“The music we were playing together was just unbelievable,” wrote Miles in his autobiography years later. “It used to send chills through me at night, and it did the same thing to ➢

audiences, too. Man, the shit we were playing in a short time was scary."

As the quintet dominated the New York jazz scene, they also cut two sessions for Prestige in 1956 (on May 11 and October 26), yielding enough material for four albums: *Cookin' With The Miles Davis Quintet*, *Relaxin'*, *Steamin'* and *Workin'*.

Those LPs completed Davis's contractual obligations for Prestige, allowing him to sign to Columbia. Coltrane, meanwhile, was growing as a player – benefitting from solo spots during live sets when Davis would simply walk off stage for a break – and had recently married Junita Naima Grubbs. But he was also battling alcohol and heroin, the drug that had been sweeping through the city's jazz clubs.

Despite Coltrane's worsening narcotic habit (which essentially saw him fired by Miles and forced to go cold turkey), Thelonious Monk was impressed enough by his playing with Miles to recruit him into his own band in the summer of '57. The run with the pianist would last until the end of the year, with a regular gig at the Five Spot in the East Village during which Coltrane continued to play hard while watching his band leader closely.

"Working with Monk brought me close to a musical architect of the highest order," he told Down Beat magazine. "I felt I learned from him in every way – through the senses, theoretically, technically. I would talk to Monk about musical problems, and he would sit at the piano and show me the answers just by playing them. I could watch him play and find out the things I wanted to know. Also, I could see a lot of things that I didn't know about at all."

Monk, who turned 40 in October 1957 and was nine years older than Coltrane, became a paternal presence for the saxophone player. Indeed, the pair's collaborative partnership is underlined on the fiery, frenetic live album, *The Thelonious Monk Quartet With John Coltrane At Carnegie Hall*, recorded on November 29, 1957, but only discovered and released in autumn 2005. The 51-minute recording (taken from two different sets) offers a snapshot of Coltrane's sheer fluidity and growing power.

MILESTONES....MILES DAVIS
COLTRANE/PRESTIGE 7105
MILES DAVIS
COLUMBIA
Kind of Blue

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR. SOMETHING THAT HASN'T BEEN PLAYED BEFORE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS."

JOHN COLTRANE

Coming up: an early press shot for Coltrane, with Miles Davis in the background.

Alamy, Getty

MILES AND MONK WERE undoubted influences on Coltrane's development, but his first recording as a solo leader was inauspicious. Recorded for Prestige at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in Hackensack on May 31, 1957, his six-track self-titled debut is spirited rather than unique. The opening track on side two, Straight Street, possibly took its name from its composer's desire to clean up for good, but *Coltrane*, for all its promise, is not an album that sounds like a gauntlet being thrown down.

Its successor, *Blue Train*, recorded four months later and released on Blue Note after a handshake deal, shows a new level of coherence and momentum, its 10-minute-plus title track setting the tone. It's certainly the most satisfying of Trane's early recordings, a vast number of which (including Lush Life, Dakar and Black Pearls, none of which were solely Coltrane recordings per se) would resurface in repackaged form as his fame grew in the '60s.

Coltrane returned to play with Miles Davis's group in early 1958; he also continued to record as a solo artist, issuing two more albums for Prestige: *John Coltrane With The Red Garland Trio* and *Soultrane*, both in that same year. His work with Miles, however, earnt him greater plaudits, as he participated in the sessions that led to *Milestones* and *Kind Of Blue*.

While *Milestones* (and particularly the title track, originally titled Miles) was defined by its modal experimentation and restrained feel, *Kind Of Blue* took those concepts to their logical conclusion, creating an album that moved far beyond bebop and added a stillness to the intensity that resided in the music. In many ways, *Kind Of Blue* is the apogee of modal jazz (where musical modes or scales and melodies are used rather than chords). The effect was to create more space in the music, typified by the brooding opener So What. It was this approach that Coltrane would take forward in his solo career.

IN JANUARY 1960, COLTRANE released *Giant Steps* on Atlantic Records. Recorded in two sessions in May '59 and a further date in December, it was his first truly groundbreaking album under his own name. It was also the first fruit of a label deal brokered by Miles's manager Harold Lovett that guaranteed Coltrane an annual income of $7,000 and therefore a modicum of stability and freedom.

The album's title was also apt, Coltrane's shift into the big league marked by seven self-composed tracks that would become widely referenced by fellow musicians. The feel of the music – typified by the title track and Naima, a beautiful, enduring ballad named for Coltrane's wife – was restless but imbued with the same restraint found on *Kind Of Blue*.

Interviews with Coltrane at the time confirm that he viewed *Giant Steps* as an exercise in moving beyond everything he'd absorbed up to that point. Drawing on the classical music he'd immersed himself in, he also stated that his new emphasis was "to write melodically".

The sessions of October 1960 saw him produce a vast amount of material, most of which retained a certain traditionalism but to which he married his emergent melodic sensibilities. It was this fusion that animates *My Favorite Things*,

Young man with a horn: in a photograph published for the first time three years ago, Coltrane and Miles Davis play at NYC's Cafe Bohemia, May 14, 1958, shortly after Trane rejoined Davis's quintet following a few months with Thelonious Monk.

Play it as he lays: Trane takes it easy in the studio.

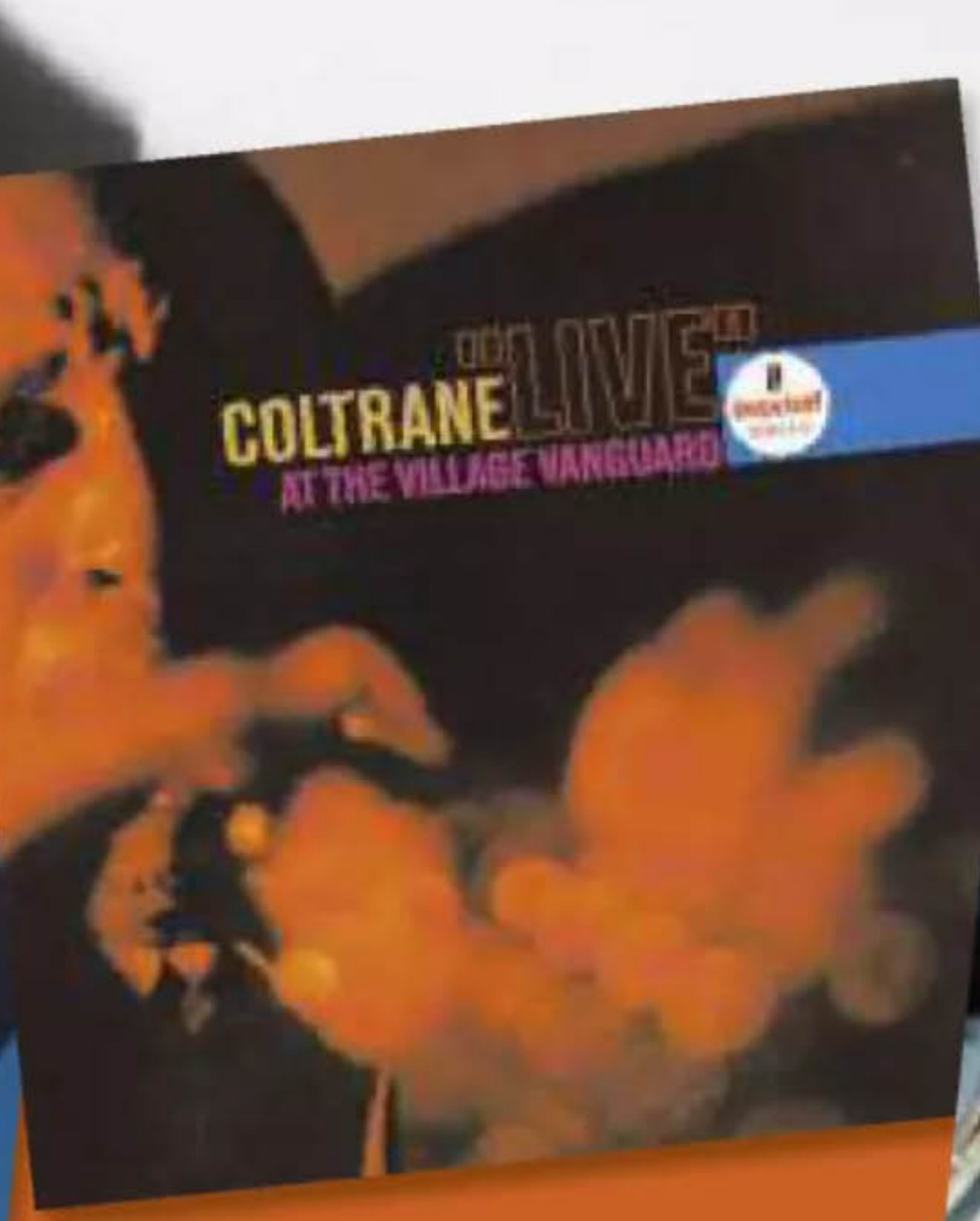
Trane Strikes!

Five John Coltrane albums that led to *A Love Supreme*. By Phil Alexander.

BLUE TRAIN
john coltrane
blue note 53428

JOHN COLTRANE
GIANT STEPS
ATLANTIC

JOHN COLTRANE
MY FAVORITE THINGS



Crescent
JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET
FEATURING: McCOY TYNER / JIMMY GARRISON / ELVIN JONES

BLUE TRAIN

(Blue Note, 1957)

★★★

Coltrane's one and only album for Blue Note is also the most consistent of his early recordings, possibly because the label in question always insisted on rehearsals prior to recording – something that Coltrane did not always do. Indeed, on *Blue Train* – his second album, recorded while he was still playing with Thelonious Monk – Trane uses a crew of crack Blue Note musicians: Lee Morgan (trumpet), Philly Joe Jones (drums), Paul Chambers (bass), Kenny Drew (piano) and Curtis Fuller (trombone). The resultant hard bop set is dominated by the blues of the title track and also features the impressive Moment's Notice, which paves the way for some of his later work.

GIANT STEPS

(Atlantic, 1960)

★★★★★

"Along with Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane has become the most influential and controversial tenor saxophonist in modern jazz," wrote Nat Hentoff in his sleevenotes for *Giant Steps*, referring to Trane's reputation for intense and powerful technique. Hentoff described Coltrane's drive and questing nature, pointing out the man's emotional impact on those who didn't even like jazz. *Giant Steps* is that kind of record: its appeal moves beyond fans into a wider world. The material is more personal too; Coltrane named tunes after his wife (Naima), his cousin (Cousin Mary) and his 10-year-old stepdaughter Syeeda (Syeeda's Song Flute). Meanwhile, the title track remains a modern jazz standard.

MY FAVORITE THINGS

(Atlantic, 1961)

★★★★

In his 1997 notes for the reissue of *My Favorite Things* Nat Hentoff charts jazz from Louis Armstrong's expansion of the solo through to Duke Ellington's arrangements and orchestration, Charlie Parker's deconstruction of the harmonic structure, on to Coltrane's creation of "new forms and textures". This landmark set tries to bring together all of those phases through four tunes. The title track, culled from The Sound Of Music, includes a dizzying performance from Coltrane on his soprano sax. Coltrane adds unexpected twists to standards Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye, But Not For Me and Summertime in his quest to drive ever forward.

LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD

(Impulse!, 1962)

★★★★

While Coltrane's studio output charted his progress, his first live album underlined just how fast he was moving. The three tracks here stem from two nights of a two-week residency at the jazz club. Spiritual has Coltrane (switching between tenor and soprano sax), Eric Dolphy (bass clarinet), McCoy Tyner (piano), Reggie Workman (bass) and Elvin Jones (drums) stretching out beautifully, but it's Chasin' The Trane – with Tyner absent and Jimmy Garrison on bass (replacing Workman to create the 'classic quartet') – that underlines how significant Trane was in the development of free jazz.

CRESCENT

(Impulse!, 1964)

★★★★

Often viewed as Coltrane's most melancholic album, *Crescent* is overshadowed by its illustrious successor. It's a more traditional post-bop album than *A Love Supreme*, and the late-night feel of its title track is reinforced by the beauteous introduction to the second track, Wise One, which then builds with great force. Bessie's Blues swings, while Lonnie's Lament sees Coltrane return to the blues with an epic, 11-minute tenor-led piece with a bass solo from Garrison. Closing tune The Drum Thing is a dark, percussive piece with interplay between Garrison and Jones under Coltrane's weaving melody. Jones then breaks into a drum workout that resolves itself with Trane at his most evocative.

≺ an album whose title track saw Coltrane adapt the Rodgers & Hammerstein Broadway show tune into something that sounded both familiar and yet possessed of an unexpected, manic sweeping elegance.

It was an approach that Coltrane returned to a year later on his reworking of English folk song Greensleeves, the opening track on side two of his 1961 album, *Africa/Brass*, performed on soprano saxophone. As with his version of My Favorite Things, his take on Greensleeves confirmed Coltrane's ability to marry a sense of tradition with forward momentum, but the track was not the album's focal point: the 16 minutes-plus Africa was. Taking up the whole of side one, the track showcases Coltrane's ability to lead a 21-strong band of musicians into fresh territory, and boasts a haunting and elegiac quality. In many respects, *Africa/Brass* – his first album for Creed Taylor's recently launched Impulse! label – marks the end of the first chapter of John Coltrane's development. It is a summation that also appears to point the way forward.

1962 WAS ARGUABLY THE MOST CRUCIAL YEAR IN John Coltrane's career. He was now a musician that other musicians looked up to. His security had increased further through his deal with Impulse! (who upped his annual guaranteed salary to $10,000), he appeared to have dealt with his demons (namely alcohol and heroin) and, while his relationship with Naima did not have long to run, he appeared more focused than ever.

His ever-evolving musical direction, however, was not favoured by all. Certain members of the jazz establishment were critical of the music he now wanted to make, with Down Beat labelling it as part of "an anti-jazz trend". Journalist Ira Gitler, a previous Trane supporter, went further in a damning review of 1962's *Live At The Village Vanguard* album in the same magazine.

"Coltrane may be searching for new avenues of expression," he wrote. "But if it is going to take this form of yawps, squawks, and countless repetitive runs, then it should be confined to the woodshed."

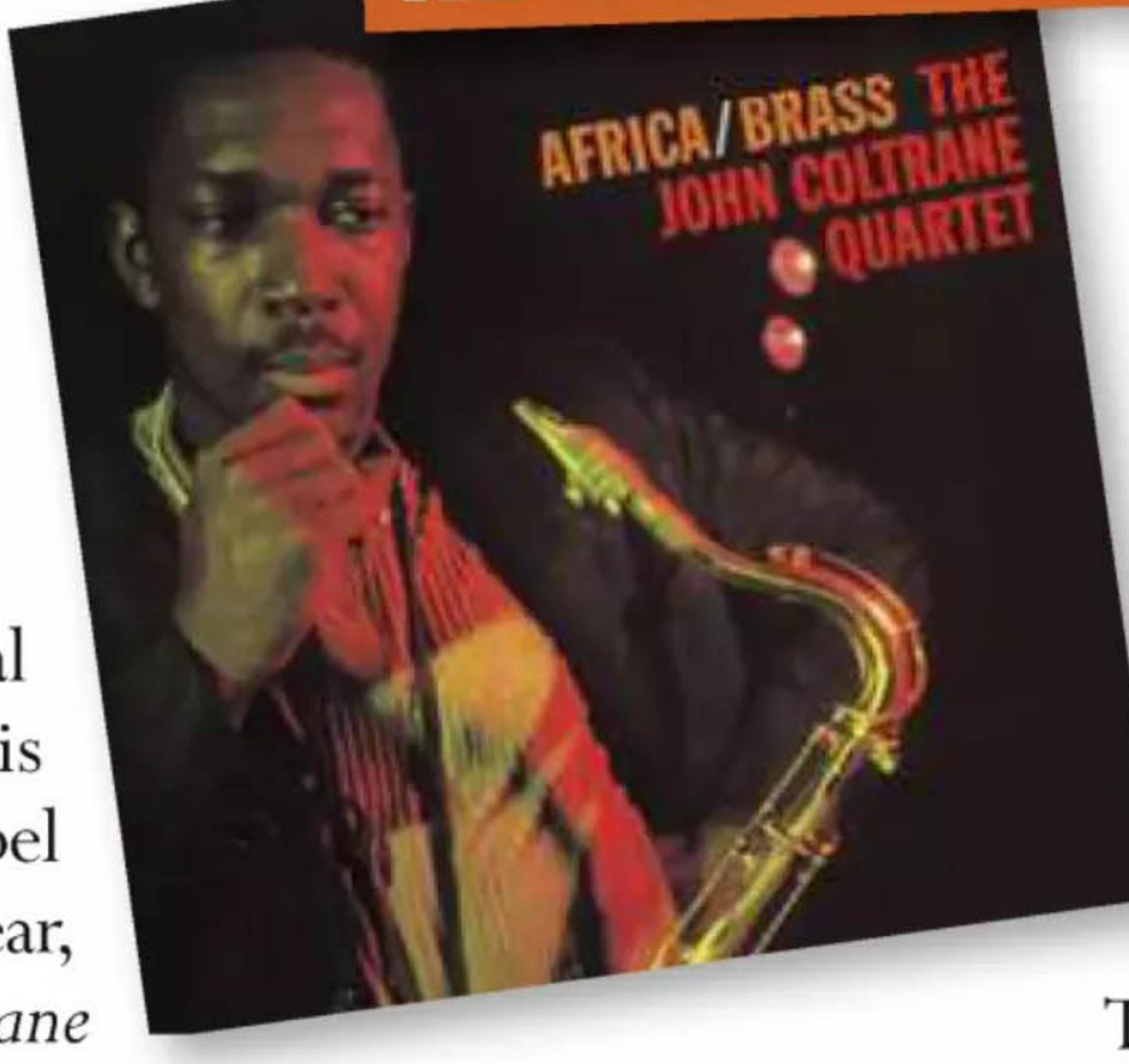
These remonstrations seemed to relate to the simple fact that jazz's momentum had moved far beyond bebop, and that the genre was now imbued with a genuinely revolutionary spirit. Albums like *We Insist!*, issued by Max Roach in 1960, linked jazz to the civil rights movement, while saxophonist Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* (released in '61) gave the genre a new name for a set of emerging avant-garde musicians. Free jazz, it seemed, was not to everyone's taste.

Coltrane, despite growing up through the bebop era, was not wedded to traditionalism. If anything, he was endlessly fascinated by sound. Hence, while certain jazz critics frowned upon the early skronking live work of the emergent, Ohio-born saxophonist Albert Ayler, Trane found himself drawn to it and compelled to understand it. Equally, he saw no threat from Sun Ra, Charles Mingus or Cecil Taylor as they searched for new forms of expression. If anything, his was an endless quest for self through music.

Rather than plunge headfirst into musical abstraction, however, Coltrane stuck to his agreement with Impulse! and allowed the label to release a requisite number of albums per year, including the *Duke Ellington And John Coltrane* album (recorded on September 26, 1962) and *Ballads* (completed at a session on November 13, 1962). Both of these albums appeared to confirm Coltrane's sense of bebop traditionalism. And yet, as *Live At The Village Vanguard* proved, Trane was moving forward and doing so with what he viewed as the perfect band – a four-piece that would become known as Coltrane's classic quartet.

"IT WAS LIKE MOSES COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN. THERE WAS THAT JOY, THAT PEACE IN HIS FACE, TRANQUILLITY."

ALICE COLTRANE



Getty

The youngest of the four was 23-year-old pianist McCoy Tyner, who hailed from Philadelphia. Tyner was part of a coterie of young musicians who had watched Coltrane grow in stature, first locally and then on a national stage, and who viewed the saxophonist as a paternal figure. Coltrane, in return, looked out for Tyner, recording one of his tracks, The Believer, during a session in January 1958 (the track would eventually be used to title a rogue Prestige album released in mid 1964). Seasoned bassist Jimmy Garrison was part of the fecund Philadelphia scene alongside Tyner and had recorded with Ornette Coleman, Jackie McLean and Lee Konitz. His rhythm partner, the 35-year-old drummer Elvin Jones, had played and recorded widely with Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins and guitarist Kenny Burrell, and was already cutting albums under his own name (Tyner would do the same in '62).

The four-piece had begun playing together in 1960 and were now a finely tuned outfit whose understanding of each other's skills is evident from the many live recordings that issued from the period, including *Afro-Blue Impressions* (recorded in late '63 but not released until '77). In terms of their studio work, while Tyner and Jones had both appeared on *My Favorite Things*, 1964's *Crescent* is a moment where their playing is at its most refined. In fact, *Crescent* is possibly Coltrane's most underrated album, a sombre yet majestic affair that can now be seen as something of a prelude to Coltrane's finest achievement.

BY THE TIME COLTRANE WALKED INTO Rudy Van Gelder's studio on December 9, 1964, it had been six months since he had recorded any music. For a jazz musician, this was an inordinate amount of time. Still, Coltrane toured endlessly that year and there were enough live recordings and outstanding sessions for him to release records in the run-up to that winter recording date.

Van Gelder's studio was in constant operation during this period, with the cream of jazz musicians recording in sessions booked by the hour. This particular booking was for four hours, with Bob Thiele at the helm.

The Brooklyn-born Thiele had hosted a jazz radio show at the age of 14 before founding Signature Records in 1961 and releasing records by Coleman Hawkins, Anita O'Day and Barbara McNair. Now a 42-year-old veteran, he had become the head of Impulse! following Creed Taylor's departure to the Verve label. Thiele afforded Coltrane as much creative freedom as he wanted, encouraging the saxophonist to develop his sound as he saw fit and ensuring that other label folk stayed well clear of their most celebrated star.

During August of '64, Coltrane had taken a break in touring to celebrate the birth of his son with pianist Alice McLeod, whom he'd met the previous year. As he spent time off the road, he also retreated to a spare room upstairs in their house in Dix Hills, New York, where he began to compose, staying there for five days. Eventually, the 37-year-old Coltrane emerged from his retreat. Alice described what she saw in her future husband (they would marry once his divorce with Naima was settled 18 months later), telling author Ashley Kahn, "It was like Moses coming down from the mountain. He walked down and there was that joy, that peace in his face, tranquillity."

The religious analogy now seems a little cumbersome, but one senses that Coltrane, after a lifetime of questing, had finally found what he was searching for: a unified piece of music, or a suite, that reflected the spirituality he'd been exploring in private for a number of years. He was raised a Christian and both his grandfathers were ministers, but Coltrane was far from a monotheist. His spiritual awakening saw him embrace God in the widest sense ➢

Soft lights and sweet music: McCoy Tyner, Art Davis and Elvin Jones on stage with Coltrane in Copenhagen, November 1961; (below) Bob Thiele, head of Impulse! and producer of *A Love Supreme* (and co-writer of What A Wonderful World).

< and accept all faiths – and the music he'd just written was designed with that in mind, hence the title: *A Love Supreme*.

Coltrane had written out the basic parts for the suite in four movements, ostensibly for a bigger ensemble than a quartet, but once in the studio with Tyner, Garrison and Jones, he wanted the spontaneity of performance to enflame the music further. McCoy Tyner confirmed as much.

"In the case of *A Love Supreme*, it was actually songs but the structure itself was very limited," he told Ashley Kahn, when interviewed for Kahn's 2002 book on the making of the album. Tyner explained that Coltrane had written down the basic chords, but that the form was shaped by the road-tested band. "We'd been playing together for so long at that point that the band had a sound, so it wasn't like we were tied down to these chords," said the pianist. "In other words, you could do what you wanted, keeping the form in mind. That's what *A Love Supreme* was about."

Tyner also said that, during live performances leading up to the recording date, there were a few dry runs of the sections of the music that makes up the record's four tracks. However, the overall feel of the album was created during that one session, with the lights down low and the playing at its most fluid and intense. Van Gelder also told Kahn that there was no mixing involved once the performances had been laid down, meaning that *A Love Supreme* captured the quartet at their most fluid and dynamic.

"I HUMBLY ASKED TO BE GIVEN THE MEANS AND PRIVILEGE TO MAKE OTHERS HAPPY THROUGH MUSIC."

JOHN COLTRANE

THERE ARE FEW BETTER WAYS TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE than with the sound of a gong. *A Love Supreme* does just that: the first track, Acknowledgement, begins with Elvin Jones' shattering hit announcing Coltrane's tenor saxophone, which rises imperiously and calmly for the opening 13 seconds, flanked by Tyner. The tempo then relaxes as Garrison supplies the central blues-orientated bass riff. The track establishes itself quickly before Coltrane's explosive reintroduction just past the minute mark. The exposition seems like an expansion on of Coltrane's previous work (Africa, Greensleeves and My Favorite Things included), arriving at a riff around the five-minute mark that defines the track melodically prior to Coltrane's intoned vocal at 6m10s. The repeated chant of "a love supreme" is a defining moment in jazz; it codifies the link between jazz and the spiritual questing of the time.

The rousing Resolution follows, with Coltrane, Tyner, Garrison and Jones in joyous form. This is a track that genuinely swings in the accepted sense of the term, with Tyner in particularly vociferous and lyrical form, and Coltrane surfing over the top.

The third and fourth tracks, the conjoined Pursuance/Psalm, start with Jones demonstrating his skills. Tyner showcases his remarkable dexterity in the first part of a soaring 17m51s display of musicality. Coltrane's melodic lines lift the music on the first part of the track, reaching climactic squalls as he heads towards seven minutes, before Jones brings the first section to a florid close. Garrison provides the bass segue into Psalm in a manner that has since been much imitated but which has rarely been quite as vocal. Coltrane picks up the baton and leads us into prayer on Psalm, with Jones on tympani. The effect is grandiose and almost overpowering, the subtle horn interacting with instrumentation that is utterly portentous.

COLTRANE WROTE THE SLEEVENOTES for *A Love Supreme* himself. They are in two parts: one addressed to the listener, the second to God. In the former he mentioned a second session for the album involving saxophone player Archie Shepp and bassist Art Davis. Both were present on that second date on December 10, as was photographer Chuck Stewart – who snapped shots often assumed to have been taken the day before. Neither Shepp's nor Davis's contributions made the final cut of the original album. Similarly, Stewart's photography from December 10 was not used as the album cover (the sleeve instead used an old shot of an intense-looking Coltrane from '62).

In the notes, Coltrane dates his spiritual awakening back to 1957, a period during which, he says: "I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music. I feel that has been granted by through his grace."

Certainly, grace is one of the adjectives that has been used endlessly to describe *A Love Supreme*. And rightly so. But the album is not merely a statement of faith (although devotion lies at its heart), nor is it an attempt to provide the listener with a concise history of jazz (although it travels through several major developments in the genre, and beyond). *A Love Supreme* is an album that defies the time in which it was made and continues to challenge the listener on an emotional, sensual, spiritual and intellectual level. Coltrane's next step was one of utter liberation with the one-track, free jazz, head-shredding masterpiece *Ascension*.

Coltrane continued to travel deep into spiritual and abstract territory before his death from liver cancer at the age of 40 on July 17, 1967. "I don't know what I'm looking for," he told jazz critic Nat Hentoff a few years before his passing. "Something that hasn't been played before. I don't know what it is. I know I'll have the feeling when I get it."

Getty (2)

You transcend me: Coltrane as seen on the cover of *A Love Supreme*.

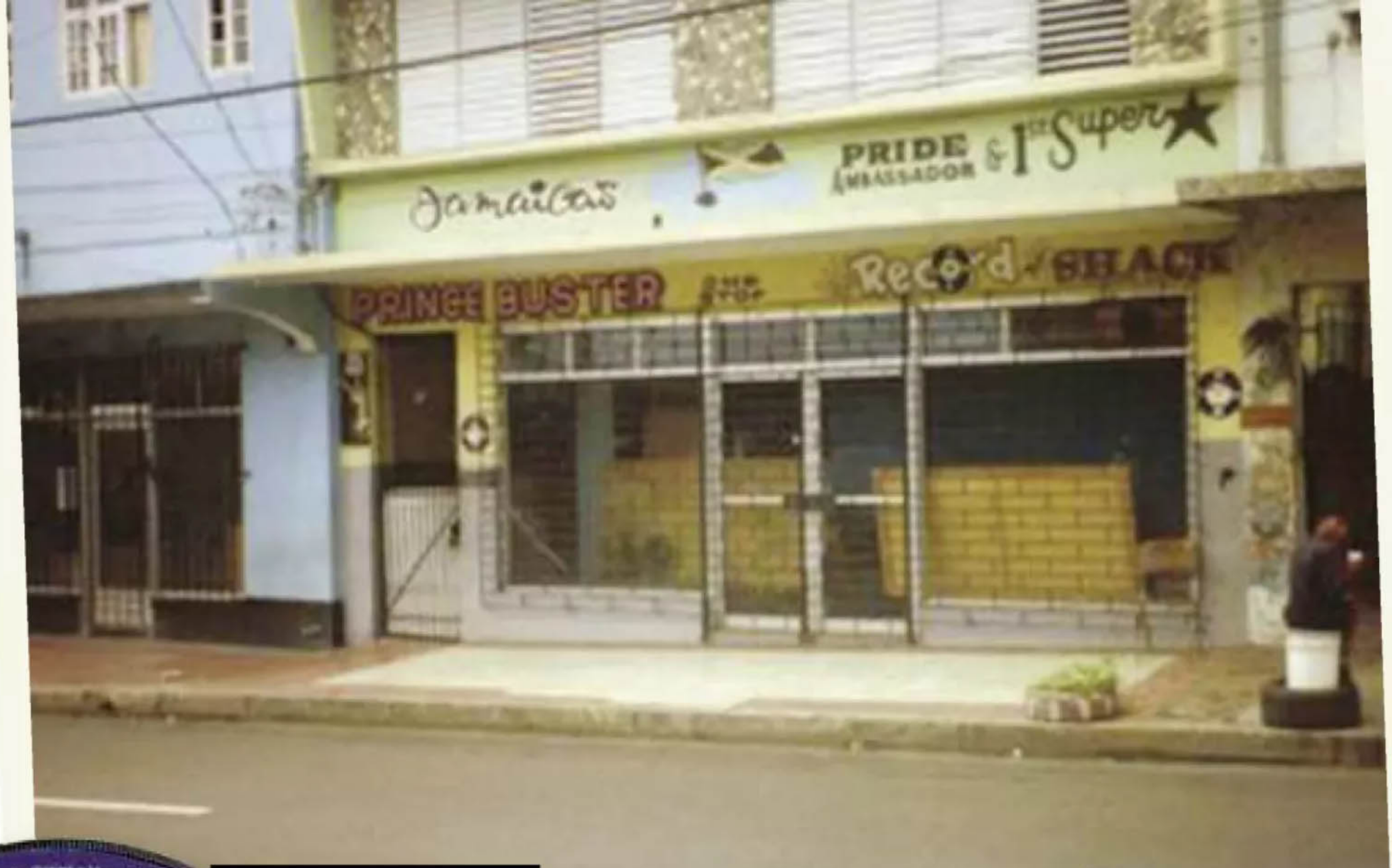
PRINCE Buster

ONE STEP BEYOND

Rex

Former boxer and sound system enforcer Prince Buster rose from Kingston's backstreets to become the prime architect of ska. MOJO travels from Orange Street to Streatham in search of the man who took Jamaican music to the world.

Words: David Katz



Prince Buster's Record Shack on Orange Street, Kingston, Jamaica.

MY FIRST GLIMPSE of Orange Street comes from the back of a battered green Peugeot on a scorching January nearly 20 years ago. The street is a major thoroughfare that heads north from St William Grant Park, once the site of public hangings and the only patch of greenery in downtown Kingston. The park and its surrounding lanes are filled with cacophonous market higglers and their clients, as well as vagrants and groups of young toughs slyly dispensing herb from shack-like speakeasies, but most of Orange Street itself is devoid of human life, like the ghost-town of a spaghetti western film set. There's a palpable tension that hints at the threat of violence.

BLUE BEAT
45/BB 170
MADNESS
(Prince Buster)
PRINCE BUSTER
MELODISC RECORDS LTD.

It's an odd feeling, because the street was once the epicentre of Jamaica's music industry, housing an array of thriving shops and businesses run by the nation's most prominent record producers. I have come to Orange Street in search of its most famous resident: Prince Buster, the man who created ska, and I was glad to be in the company of singer Max Romeo, who knows the street like the back of his hand.

The Peugeot was manoeuvred onto the curb in front of a vacant lot, "No urine here" daubed on its rear wall. Halfway down the block, there it is: an iconic, yet seemingly abandoned, two-storey building, fresh paint announcing the space as the "World Famous Record Shack", brought to us by "Jamaica's Pride Ambassador and First Superstar". Compared to the other businesses nearby, the Record Shack is pristine. Indeed, aside from the Victory Bible Institute and Computer Store, Prince Buster's shop is the smartest and most brightly coloured place on all of Orange Street, yet its shutters are drawn and iron grilles line the windows. "Me hear Buster coming any day now," Max insists. "Mek we check back later in the week."

During the month in 1997 I spent traversing Kingston, interviewing as many veteran artists as possible, Buster's presence hovered like a wandering spirit. I often found myself back at the Record Shack, in the company of greying vocalists or portly record producers, but every visit proved fruitless; there was simply no sign of the man. Yet Buster was constantly referenced by the older heads. Derrick Morgan recalled their long-standing friendship throughout their famous feuding on vinyl, while singers Errol Dunkley and Gregory Isaacs and producer Bunny Lee all praised him for kickstarting their careers, as did ranking toaster Big Youth, despite once publicly berating him for lack of payment. Even Lee Perry was asking if I knew how to contact him, because Prince Buster is someone he still regards as "special".

SHE WAS A ROUGH RIDER
ROCK STEADY REGGEA
STAR PERF
PRINCE
BLUE BEAT
I FEEL THE SPIRIT
PRINCE BUSTER

Despite his status among fellow musicians, Buster's music was entirely absent from Jamaica's audio landscape. Unlike protégés such as Alton Ellis and John Holt, who both regularly performed on the island during the 1980s and '90s, Buster had not graced a Jamaican stage in decades, and because he never cut a record in the dancehall style his music was simply unheard on Jamaica's airwaves in recent times.

On my return to Kingston towards the end of 1998, Buster's shop looked just the same. Rumours were also circulating that Buster had recently met with various politicians in the hope of regenerating Orange Street – a daunting task, as the entire downtown area has long been in serious decline while the island continues to be rocked by financial scandals linked to corrupt politicians. In its present state, Orange Street becoming a tourist attraction seemed highly unlikely, perhaps almost as unlikely as a sighting of the Prince in his homeland.

Back in London, fate intervened. In the summer of 1999, Buster was allegedly seen at the mike of a south London sound system, which seemed incredible, except that some of his back catalogue was re-pressed in London around the same time. Buster is also known to have offspring in London, making it increasingly plausible that he was actually around. Then, at an album launch in Camden, I found myself face to face with the Prince, his unmistakable visage belying his age, despite its visible scarring. After hearing of my fruitless searches in Kingston, Buster suggested I pay a visit to Streatham, where he was staying with a friend. Thus began the first of several 'reasoning' sessions, in which Buster shared memories of his incredible career.

Born Cecil Bustamante Campbell on May 28, 1938, his middle name would spawn his nickname of Buster. (It referenced Sir Alexander Bustamante, the trade union leader who led Jamaica's anti-colonial movement in the 1930s.) He was proud at having been born and raised in downtown Kingston, despite the harsh poverty that saw one sister die in infancy.

"Coxsone [Dodd] come from St Thomas, Duke Reid come from Port Antonio, but I am the only one that born and grow on Orange Street," he began proudly, his voice a deep, gravelly growl. "My father work with the railroad, my mother work at the match factory and they grew me up with a strict principle of Christianity."

"I COULDN'T BUY RHYTHM AND BLUES IN AMERICA, SO I HAVE TO MAKE A JAMAICAN SETTING FOR THE MUSIC, AND THAT WAS SKA."

In the 1940s, the mass migration of poor folk from the countryside turned much of downtown Kingston into slums where street violence was a fact of everyday life. In this turbulent urban environment, the young Buster cultivated twin loves of singing and boxing. Buster says he first performed at the Glass Bucket club at the age of seven, and began boxing in gyms aged eight after being spotted in street fights by middleweight champion Speedy Baker. He was soon knocking down older opponents, particularly after sound system selector and ex-boxer Count Machuki helped him perfect his left hook.

As Buster's reputation for toughness grew, so did his love of the sound system scene. Enamoured with R&B artists such as Fats Domino, he was an avid follower of Tom The Great Sebastian, one of Kingston's most impressive sound system pioneers of the late 1940s and early 1950s. But after former policeman Duke Reid used hired thugs to eject Tom from the downtown area, Buster joined forces with younger challenger Clement Dodd, whose recently launched Sir Coxsone's Downbeat sound system proved the biggest challenge in the wake of Tom's demise. The connection came just as a handful of sound system proprietors had begun recording a Jamaican variation of R&B with local musicians. Sir Coxsone approached Buster through Count Machuki after Buster was seen pursuing a notorious gangster called Mean Stick down Orange Street following an altercation at a dice game. Although the street gang Buster fronted came from Duke Reid's neighbourhood, Buster was ultimately compelled to join forces with Coxsone to avenge Reid's mistreatment of Tom.

Rude boy: Buster with fellow Blue Beat artist Brigitte Bond, London, February 1964.

"Tom The Great Sebastian is still the greatest sound system ever," he emphasises, "and Tom was a nice, decent, calm, respectable man who want to just play music, but Duke Reid ran him out of town with a band of Back-O-Wall bad man who pull over the amplifier and mash up the speaker boxes."

From the beginning of his time with Coxsone's sound system, Buster had to fend off violent attacks. He was instrumental in raising Dodd's popularity, not only by ensuring that dances would not be spoilt by marauding interlopers, but also through spying on rival sets to determine which tunes were popular. Yet the promised pay from Coxsone was never forthcoming. Buster opted for self-sufficiency. "Machuki was the number one disc jockey," Buster grumbles, "and Machuki was constantly leaving [Coxsone] for the same reason. When both of us talk, it didn't make sense."

Buster's plan was to travel to Florida on a farm-work team to bring back a fresh supply of R&B to launch his own sound system, but says Coxsone used familial influence to quash him. "I was building my own sound system and I tried to win a visa to go to America to buy rhythm and blues. I had passed every test in the farm-work programme, and then Coxsone's father-in-law, who was a politician, dropped a dime on me and they took me out of the line the morning I was supposed to go." He opted for the next best thing: recording his own productions with local musicians, including noted drummer Arkland 'Drumbago' Parks, trombonist Rico Rodriguez, tenor sax player Stanley 'Ribs' Notice, and rhythm guitarist Jah Jerry Haynes.

"I went to Drumbago, a drummer who I know for a long time, tell him I would like to make some music," he explains. "Drumbago being an instrumental man, it didn't take him long to understand what we were moving to, so we went to JBC studio and make a tune called Little Honey – the first tune I ever made on record."

Having made his recording debut, with funds provided by his mother, Buster established the first incarnation of his Record Shack in the corner of a dressmaker's shop at 49 Charles Street, just around the corner from Coxsone's premises, then swiftly moved across the road to a larger space at number 36 that could also house his Voice Of The People sound system.

"That was where all them shocks came out of," he says proudly. "I used to rehearse the band at the back of my record shop with different artists, and then we went down to Federal Records and recorded what we now call ska. I couldn't buy rhythm and blues in America, so I have to make a Jamaican setting for the music, and that was ska." ➢

Rex

BUSTER'S NEWLY CREATED GENRE was the excitement of the independence era personified, and it brought widespread changes to the Kingston music scene during the early '60s. Ska's frantic rhythm, which placed emphasis on the second and fourth beats of every measure, merged elements of big-band jazz with Latin cadences and Caribbean folk forms to yield something uniquely Jamaican. But even before the ska form was solidified, Prince Buster shifted emphasis away from standard R&B via early efforts such as his boastful They Got To Go. The Folkes Brothers' monumental Oh Carolina, one of his earliest productions, was something else entirely, being one of the very first Jamaican recordings to expose the African roots of the nation's dominant culture through the astounding sound of Count Ossie's Rastafarian drum troupe, based at a commune in the hills of eastern Kingston and generally shunned by society for their religious beliefs. Demand for the tune was so intense that both Jamaican radio stations gave it regular airing, despite initial bans. It became one of the biggest Jamaican chart hits of 1961.

Other influential ska discs, such as Eric 'Monty' Morris's Money Can't Buy Life, Bobby Aitken's Never Never and the Prince's own One Hand Wash The Other and Madness swiftly followed, proving so popular in Jamaica that Coxsone felt forced into retaliating, employing Lee Perry to compose lyrics insulting Buster, such as Prince In The Back, Mad Head and Don't Copy. Conversely, Duke Reid hired Buster as an uncredited producer for songs such as Let George Do It and Blackberry Brandy. His Voice Of The People sound system had swiftly conquered these better-established rivals, but Buster learned early that there was little money to be made from dance clashes, so he borrowed more cash from his mother and began travelling to Miami to import jukeboxes as a more reliable source of income, later branching into slot machines.

Things stepped up another gear when, from 1962 onwards, Buster started spending significant periods in London courtesy of Emil Shalit, the founder of Melodisc, a jazz and blues imprint that became one of the first to release Caribbean and African music in the UK. Arranging to distribute Buster's product in Britain, Melodisc's Blue Beat subsidiary became synonymous with the Prince.

"Mr Shalit is a very wise man," says Buster. "He know some 10-plus languages and was an intelligence officer in the United States Army, and Mr Shalit recognise something in me; he figured that I should stop the sound system and concentrate on writing and recording. Speaking like a father, him say, 'What you are getting here is empty glory,' because the sound system is a lot of excitement, but the profit margin wasn't really great. So I step away from the sound system, and Mr Shalit's advice worked out fruitful."

By the time Prince Buster played his first live shows in Britain in 1963, backed by Lynn Taitt And The Jets, his mother and sister had settled near London's Caledonian Road, allowing Prince to feel at home in an alien environment, as did the presence of trombonist Rico, who'd moved to London in 1960. Count Suckle, another old friend from the Kingston sound system scene, was running a seedy dive called the Roaring 20s on Carnaby Street, where Buster started mingling with a cosmopolitan, interracial crowd that included Nigerian master percussionist Ambrose Campbell and upcoming keyboardist Georgie Fame. After hearing hot ska tunes cut in Jamaica by rival producers during his absence, Buster brought Fame and other English musicians into the studio to cut the landmark Wash Wash, a ska recasting of show tune That Lucky Old Sun, which made waves on both sides of the Atlantic and earnt Buster an appearance on Ready Steady Go! in 1964.

"The Les Dawson Band had played a session for Laurel Aitken and the drummer really got to my head," Buster explains. "We mixed Rico with the band and Georgie Fame, and an African guy Speedy [Acquaye] played bongos."

Such recordings and album releases as I Feel The Spirit, Fly Flying Ska and Ska-lip-soul made Buster a Mod icon in Britain, while his gregarious nature and sense of dress resulted in London's teddy boys becoming unofficial enforcers during UK performances. "When I reach Nottingham, a whole batch of teddy boys left London and was there before me," he laughs. "They became part of my entourage because them keep things orderly."

Being in London also allowed Buster to become acquainted with one of his idols: the boxer Cassius Clay, who was then training at White City for his fight against Henry Cooper. Buster says their friendship was instantaneous, long lasting and multifaceted. After Clay announced in 1964 that he had joined the Nation of Islam and taken the name Muhammad Ali, Buster followed suit, taking the name Yusef Muhammad Ali in deference. "We just clicked," Buster explains. "He invited me to visit him in Miami, where I was always travelling to from Jamaica, so I started attending Mosque 29. My parents were Garvey-ites, and the Nation of Islam was really inspired from Marcus Garvey, so it wasn't too strange to me. It was stand up and do for yourself what you think somebody should do for you, respect and be respected."

The connection was strengthened when Buster travelled to New York with Monty Morris and Jimmy Cliff to perform at the 1964 World's Fair as part of a Jamaican ska delegation backed by uptown club act Byron Lee And The Dragonaires; the singers were delighted to meet Ali in Harlem, though the World's Fair shows were disappointing as the performers felt The Skatalites should have been present and US audiences did not take to ska.

Back in Jamaica, Buster continued to rule the Jamaican charts with ska scorchers like Burke's Law, One Step Beyond and Hard Man Fe Dead. When the cooler sounds of rocksteady took over, Buster teamed up with Lee Perry for Johnny Cool, Ghost Dance and the phenomenal Judge Dread, a courtroom drama in which Kingston's wayward 'rude boys' were sentenced to 400 years' detention for terrorising innocents. Then, as the new reggae sound came marching in, finding favour with skinheads in Britain, Buster's work turned decidedly rude on tracks such as Wreck A Buddy, Pum Pum A Go Kill You and Big Five, while Ganja Plant extolled the virtues of the "wisdom weed".

Although his output waned in the early 1970s as he turned to back catalogue reissues, he cut some excellent work with emerging neighbourhood hopefuls such as Dennis Brown, Gregory Isaacs

CROWN JEWELS

Four crucial Prince Buster collections. By David Katz.

Original Golden Oldies Vol. 1

(PRINCE BUSTER LP, 1967)

This compilation showcases Buster's pioneering early works in ska and Jamaican R&B. It's a killer set from start to finish, including landmark recordings such as Blackhead Chineyman, They Got To Come, Madness, Enjoy Yourself and Wash Wash.

Fabulous Greatest Hits

(FAB LP, 1967)

PRINCE BUSTER
FABulous
GREATEST HITS

Though best known for ska, Buster's rocksteady material is equally enthralling, as revealed by this dynamite compilation. Along with ska killers Al Capone and Ten Commandments are rocksteady classics such as Judge Dread and Ghost Dance, both featuring Lee 'Scratch' Perry.

King Of Ska

(JAPAN CD, 1992/REISSUE: JET STAR CD, 1999)

Prince Buster

Great compilation of rare ska sides originally put together for the Japanese market, expertly picked by Gaz Mayall and featuring excellent audio fidelity throughout. Outstanding numbers include Don't Throw Stones, 7 Wonders Of The World, Downbeat Burial and Ska Town.

The Message Dubwise

(FAB/MELODISC LP, 1975)

THE MESSAGE

One of the first dub albums ever issued, and still one of the most admired and compelling, *The Message Dubwise* presents Prince Buster in the producer's chair for early roots reggae instrumentals cut shortly before his exit from Jamaica for America. It also features a medley from protegé Big Youth.

Rest assured: Buster at the height of his cult fame, London, 1967; (below) live in Bedford, August 2007.

Rex (2)

and Big Youth. Then, in 1972, after producing The Message Dubwise, one of the first full-length dub albums ever released, Buster fell silent after conflict with the Jamaican government over the mosque he established at 47 Charles Street. "The mosque was standing up for black people, the oppressed," he explains, "and the congregation was huge, and that's what worried the government – we would have 200 people upstairs and have a next 200 out in the street. I was seeing it to build up society, not break it down, and when the government get scared of me, I laugh. They think I want to overthrow them, but that never enter my mind. I really see myself as correcting the situation, but one of the intelligence officers said, 'The problem is, people listen to you. Anywhere you go, you draw crowd, and it worries them.'"

Hounded out of Jamaica by the end of the '70s, Buster had basically retired from the music business, being a long-term resident of Miami who only spent fleeting periods in Jamaica, but with the coming of Two Tone in Britain, a whole new generation was turned on to his music, particularly through the efforts of Madness, who not only named themselves after one of his songs and requested his return in their debut single, The Prince, but took their cover of One Step Beyond to Number 2.

HIS RETURN TO THE STAGE FINALLY CAME AT Selhurst Park in 1984 as a special guest of The Skatalites at the first Reggae Sunsplash held in London, but he only sang three numbers and probably would have disappeared from view again had it not been for the concerted efforts of committed ska fanatic Gaz Mayall, son of British blues legend John Mayall and leader of 'Gaelic ska' act The Trojans, who brought Buster back into the studio in the late 1980s. "What really drove me back was Gaz," Buster explains. "Right from the first, him coming like family, and I think Gaz's awe of me motivated me more than anything, because I would let him down if I don't do it."

"I'M SATISFIED THAT I HAVE THE GENUINE LOVE OF THE PEOPLE – I DEFEND THE WEAK, BUT I DON'T HATE. I LOVE PEOPLE."

Further belated glory came in 1998 when a version of his 1967 hit Whine And Grine, reconfigured by Aswad's rhythm section, was used in a Levi's jeans advert, bringing Prince Buster to Top Of The Pops.

In the first decade of the new millennium, Buster returned to the live arena with a vengeance, topping the bill at a number of festivals around the world with support act The Junction Band, led by his friend and manager Delroy Williams. He also recorded a still-unreleased album with the band – the first new Prince Buster studio recording for decades.

"At seven and a half years old, I sing in Glass Bucket Club and get beaten because me never reach school on time the next morning," he says with a grin. "Bunny Wailer tell David Rodigan, 'Prince Buster is the model', and I'm satisfied that I have lifted up the level of consciousness of Jamaica's rejected and despised, satisfied I make them feel like somebody and have pride in themselves.

"Nobody expect anything big to come from where I was at that time," he continues. "It's like a jungle, and I am the man who led people out beyond the jungle, because I went outside and demonstrate, and then if Buster can do it, we can do it.

"I am satisfied that I have the genuine love of the people, and the way I look 'pon it, I fight the government, I defend the weak, but I don't hate – I love people. And I think all these qualities will carry me on long after I am gone."

MORE REGGAE! Turn the page for the story of Rocksteady...

THE ROCKSTEADY EMPEROR

AFTER SKA, JAMAICAN MUSIC TOOK A SWEET POP DIVERSION THANKS TO DUKE REID, THE PISTOL-PACKING EX-POLICEMAN WHOSE RIVALRY WITH PRINCE BUSTER AND CLEMENT 'COXSONE' DODD OFTEN LED TO BLOODSHED. ANDREW PERRY PROFILES THE DON BEHIND ROCKSTEADY.

Reid's
Sound
REIDS

Speakers corner: Duke Reid's Trojan sound system, Jamaica, 1957.

EIDS SOUND SYSTEM

David Katz

High-water mark: The Paragons, whose hit The Tide Is High was produced by Reid.

Getty

THE STORY OF JAMAICAN MUSIC IS peppered with intriguing and colourful characters – prophets, outlaws, magicians, patricians, nutcases, zealots. By the late '50s, three such titanic figures dominated the sound system business, which *was* Jamaican culture at that time: Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd, Prince Buster and Arthur 'Duke' Reid.

In their lively and often violent three-way rivalry, it was Buster who invented ska and thus ruled through the '60s up to 1966. From 1968, Clement Dodd would become the pivotal force in Kingston as the first rumblings of reggae emanated from Studio One. But in the two-year window between those two clear-cut skankin' dominions, in the crucial, inspirational, transitional months between ska and reggae, there was but one sound that would prevail across the island – the Duke's.

During that period, he established a cooler, sweeter musical style called rocksteady, cutting some of the most sublime tunes in all of pop history.

Ironically, given the soulfulness of the great records which bear his Treasure Isle production stamp, legend has it that Reid himself was no pussycat. Far from it, he has gone down in reggae history as unsympathetic and mean, a mob-handed crazy who first introduced the trappings of gangsterism to the Kingston music scene, a non-musical tyrant who would pistol-whip anyone fool enough to lark about during one of his sessions.

UNTIL THE 1990S, REGGAE was chronicled desperately poorly, if at all. Duke Reid passed away in the mid '70s, and his story is sketchy – all grist to the mill of his lurid myth. This much is known fact: he was born Arthur Reid in 1915 in Port Antonio, across the Blue Mountains from Kingston on the other side of Jamaica's south-eastern tip. After moving to the capital in his twenties, he served in the police force and rose to the rank of sergeant in West Kingston, by which time he was familiar with anybody with clout there, on either side of the tracks.

A major life change suggested itself from without, when Lucille, his wife, made a sizable win on the national lottery. He turned in his badge and set up his own business with the Treasure Isle liquor stores, before opening a restaurant and a dry cleaner's. All these were in the heart of his old downtown beat – Reid was a man who could look after himself, even in Jamaica's most dangerous quarters.

"Nobody loved Duke Reid," says reggae historian Steve Barrow. "Reid wasn't loved in the way that people loved Coxsone Dodd, or that they were prepared to do anything for Prince Buster.

"Duke was 15, 20 years older. He was real old-school, supported the JLP, the conservative party. Also, Buster was different, he was a ghetto man. Duke Reid and Coxsone – they weren't Kingston men, they came from outside and, in Jamaican terms, weren't ghetto people."

Reid had a shrewd business head on his shoulders, as well as a garrulous personality and physically imposing demeanour. He got himself a radio show on the local RJR station, which he would use to advertise his businesses, and also to broadcast the music that was his passion, US R&B. His programme was called Treasure Isle Time, and his theme song was Tab Smith's My Mother's Eyes.

Around 1950, at one of his outlets at 33 Bond Street in downtown Kingston, he capitalised on the success of Treasure Isle Time and set up a sound system, called Duke Reid the Trojan, the epithet deriving from the Bedford Trojan van, with which his minions would haul around booze, PA equipment and other shady goods.

His 'sound' would air the latest R&B hits by Fats Domino, Louis Jordan, The Tams, etc, but also obscure stuff, personally imported from the US. This was a cloak-and-dagger enterprise, whereby his agents would regularly hop aboard a merchant vessel to America's East coast solely to buy records.

The tunes themselves were a matter of high secrecy, helping give the sound its identity, and the edge over its competitors. Famously, some three decades before such a practice became common among Northern soul DJs, Reid would scratch all the information from each disc's labels to prevent his rivals discovering the titles of his most popular tunes..

Similar tactics were employed in the late '50s when Reid started recording local bands who'd copy American R&B tracks he couldn't get hold of. This practice continued into the ska era. Derrick Morgan, ska's first pin-up vocalist, remembers his debut 45 being subject to just such chicanery.

"When I made Loverboy for Duke Reid," he recalls, "Coxsone recorded a copy version. On whatever corner you go, they playing it, and it would be the Number 1 song on the corner, but Coxsone called it Ska On The Rocks. When Duke and Coxsone clashed at Forester's Hall, even I couldn't tell which one was playing."

For the punter, this whole air of competition meant that you were guaranteed to hear sizzling sounds the whole night through.

"I used to love to go the different dance and hear some serious music," recalled Desmond Dekker, who was a teenager during the Big Three's tenure and regularly attended their soirées. "It was a matter of who have the latest and the best music. You hear music that you never hear before. Wow, something else! Because it start from about eight o'clock and go on back until eight o'clock in the morning, and I think I could do another day or two listening to the music!"

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A FAR DARKER SIDE TO this rivalry. From the off, Reid gathered around him a small squadron of toughs, who, according to him, were the requisite protection he needed, having made so many enemies as a cop. These thugs were aggressors, though, and would routinely, without provocation, plough through rival dances, beating up people indiscriminately, and if possible trashing the decks and PA equipment – all to drive people over to Reid's own dances.

Reid, by all accounts, became slightly consumed by his own self-tailored, king-of-the-streets, Scarface-type ideas. He would often make a grand entry to his dances, swanning through the crowd in a cape and tin crown. On special occasions, he would be carried in, similarly attired, by his flunkies on a sedan chair. More worryingly, he took to wearing two pistols at his waist on a bullet belt. Sometimes he'd sling a shotgun over his shoulder – and he was a prize-winning police marksman. Some folks even claim to have seen him carrying hand grenades.

"Coxsone told me how him and Duke Reid used to draw guns playfully at each other," says Steve Barrow, "but it wasn't all so playful, because their supporters were lobbing chunks of concrete at each other over the walls where the dances were."

"Duke carry his handcuffs and a knuckleduster, too," remembered Brent Dowe, who sang lead in '60s harmony trio The Melodians. "His liquor store was in a bad area – to keep his liquors safe, people had to be fearful of him. But when it came to music, he was like a baby – he loved music and the sweeter it was the better he liked it."

Reid was the first to move into recording R&B covers, around 1957. Using the local Federal studio, he employed the in-house engineer to do the technical stuff but ultimately paid for the recording, thus owning it and earning the right to call himself producer – in the Hollywood sense, almost.

Coxsone and Buster soon followed suit, Buster going a step further by spicing up the jazz/R&B rhythms with a quintessentially JA hop-skip-and-a-jump, and thus inventing ska.

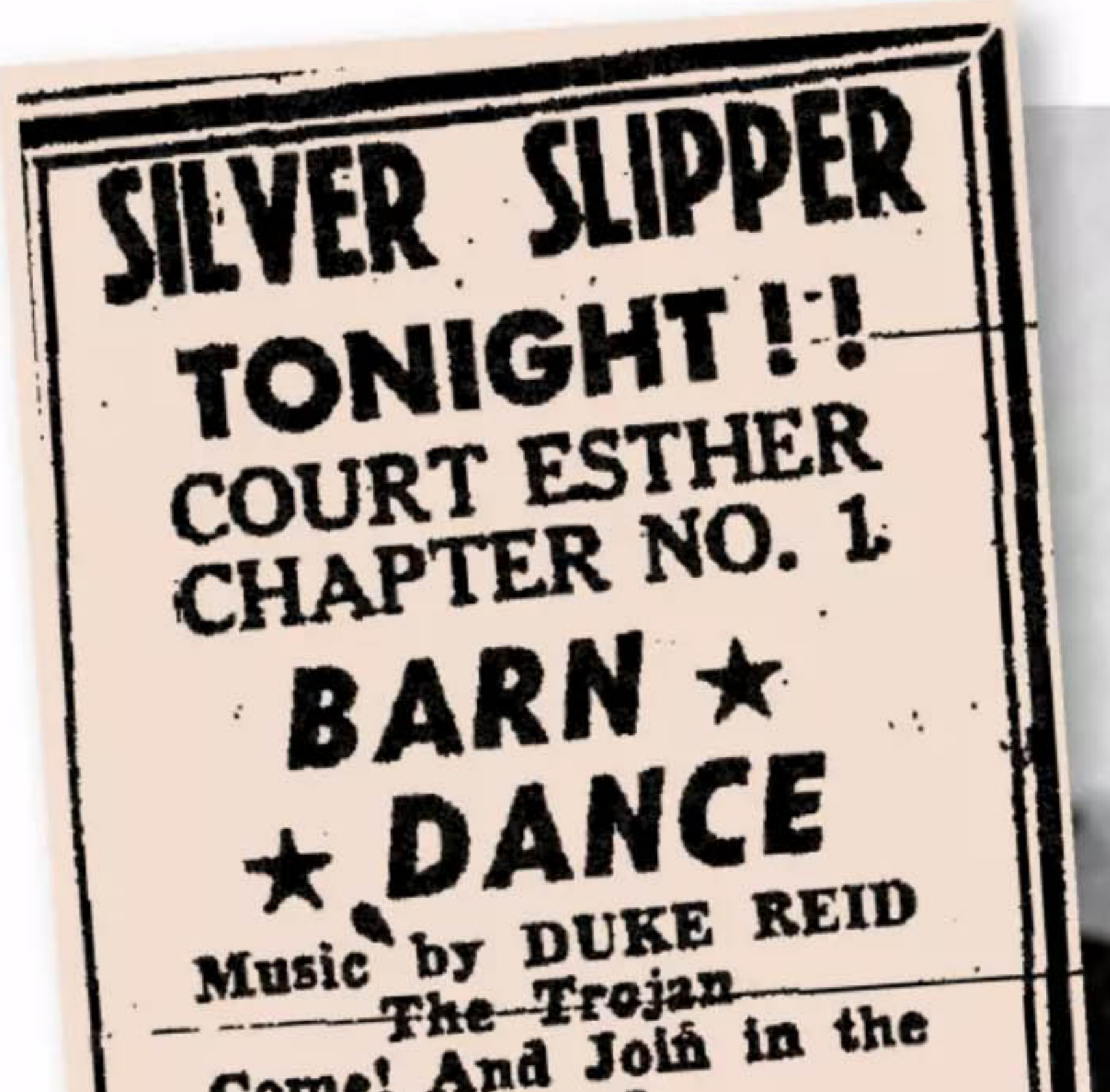
Reid, initially, had no time for ska. As a seasoned R&B aficionado, it struck him as Mickey Mouse music. Not so Clement Dodd. He was a jazz buff and soon jumped on the bandwagon, thus eventually forcing Reid, almost just for the sake of business, to join in. Despite Reid's resistance to the form, some of the greatest tunes by The Skatalites collective – including Man In The Street and Eastern Standard Time – were his productions.

Equally abiding from this era were some of the records he cut by Derrick Morgan, some with Patsy (Todd), including Feel So Fine. Morgan remembered the studio set-up well. Reid had built his studio on top of his premises at 33 Bond Street. He would pretty much let the musicians go up there and get on with the music, but monitored their progress by means of a bugging device, wired straight from upstairs into a speaker on his desk downstairs.

"As a producer, he was good," said Morgan. "Say he didn't like what the drummer was playing, he would pull the stick out of the drummer's hand and start hitting out the riddim him want. He didn't play music himself, he used his mouth and tell people what he wanted. He was that kind of guy."

Reid also had a wicked sense of humour, which added to his love-me-or-hate-me allure. Desmond Dekker told a long story of how Reid tried to hawk him from rival producer Leslie Kong. When Kong turned up and begged Dekker to come back, Reid sat in the corner chuckling to himself, as if it had all been a charade for his own amusement. ➢

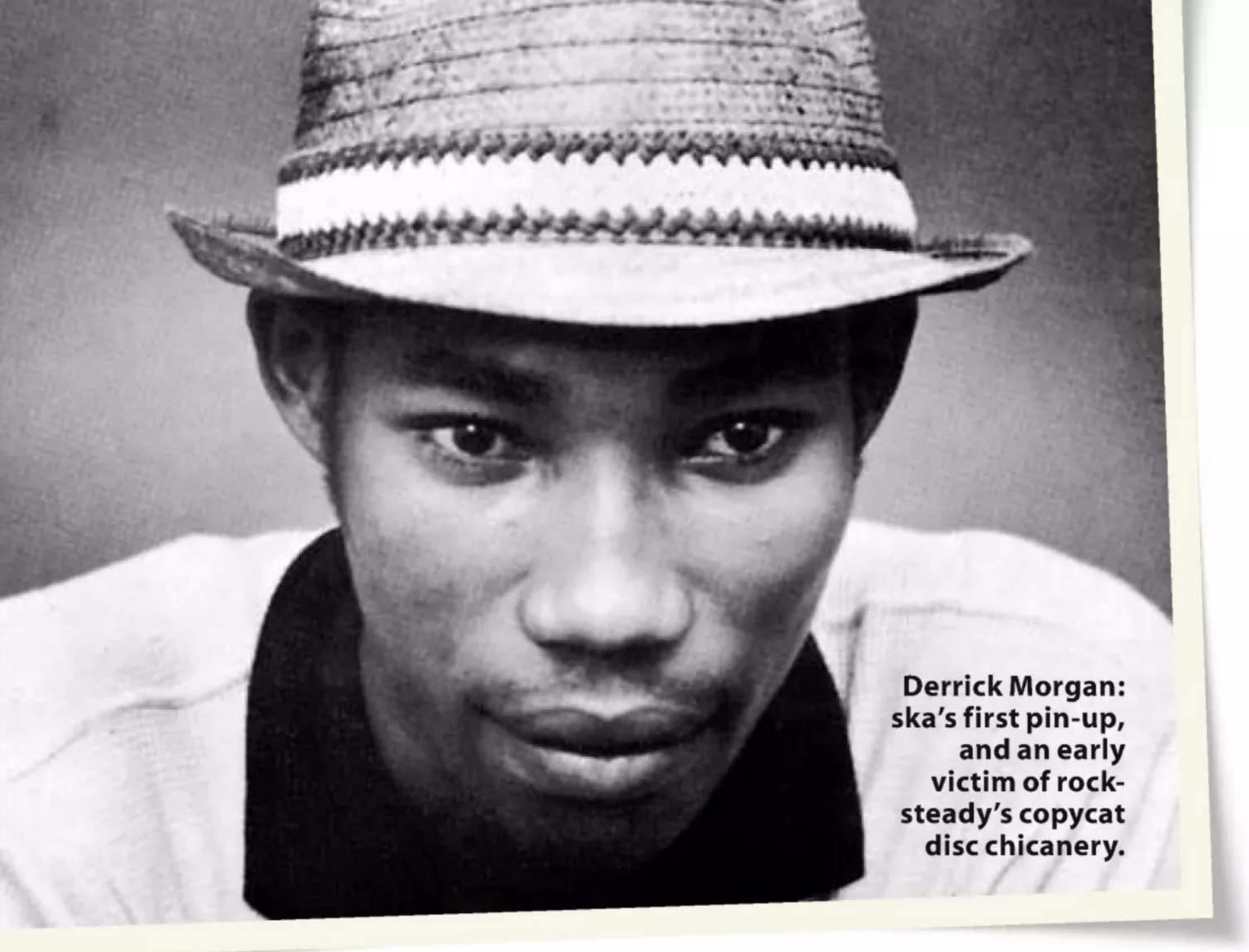
"DUKE CARRY HIS HANDCUFFS AND A KNUCKLE-DUSTER TOO. BUT WHEN IT CAME TO MUSIC, HE WAS LIKE A BABY. THE SWEETER IT WAS THE BETTER."



SILVER SLIPPER
TONIGHT !!
COURT ESTHER
CHAPTER NO. 1
BARN ★
★ DANCE
Music by DUKE REID
~~The Trojan~~
Come! And Join in the
Fun!
COVE

STUDIO 1
LITTLE NUT TREE
(The Melodians)
BLUE BEAT
45/BB 57
FEEL SO FINE
(D. Morgan, Patsy)
DERRICK MORGAN AND PATSY
MELODISC RECORDS LTD.

The Melodians, featuring Brent Dowe, another three-part harmony band on Treasure Isle.



Derrick Morgan: ska's first pin-up, and an early victim of rocksteady's copycat disc chicanery.

By 1968, though, Reid was losing interest in ska and business wasn't going well. "He bought a lotta tractors and so on," says Morgan, "and got in a little bankruptcy, and I left him to do recordings for someone else. From there, he decided to get right back into music, and that's how he started the rocksteady."

THROUGH THE EARLY '60S, R&B IN AMERICA HAD evolved into the slower, bluesier soul. This change began to filter into Kingston's sound systems, with many of its key musicians taking note, leading ska through a similar evolution.

In truth, people were beginning to flag at ska's relentless pace, which was particularly hard for dancers to keep up with during the abnormally hot summer of 1966. The joyous sound of Independence was no longer appropriate since 'free' Jamaica was sliding towards political and economic chaos. Also, as chronicled in Alton Ellis's Dance Crasher (a song produced by Reid himself), the violence Reid had instigated on the scene was spreading and, on some level, it was deemed that a less-crazed soundtrack might help the vibes chill down a few degrees.

For all these reasons, a new hybrid of ska and soul emerged – rocksteady. The focus shifted away from ska's horn players, towards a smaller – and less costly – rhythm section, with the kick drum hammering the third beat in the bar (aka the 'one drop'), the newly arrived electric bass lumbering out into the foreground, and the electric guitar and organ played as part of the rhythmic brew.

Lynn Taitt, a six-string émigré from Trinidad, is often credited as rocksteady's chief architect, and would orchestrate many of Treasure Isle's classic recordings from the era, alongside Tommy McCook's Supersonics.

"THE BAND WERE FKING ABOUT IN THE STUDIO, SMOKING AND LAUGHING. DUKE WENT UP WITH HIS GUN AND FIRED AT THE SKIRTING BOARD"**

The Impressions, with Curtis Mayfield (left): regular visitors to Kingston, they inspired rocksteady's three-part pop harmony singing.

How rocksteady really changed things came as a direct influence from Curtis Mayfield's Impressions, who'd played numerous shows at Kingston's Regal Theatre. Suddenly, vocal trios were everywhere, giving a shape to rocksteady which made a lot more sense to Mr Reid.

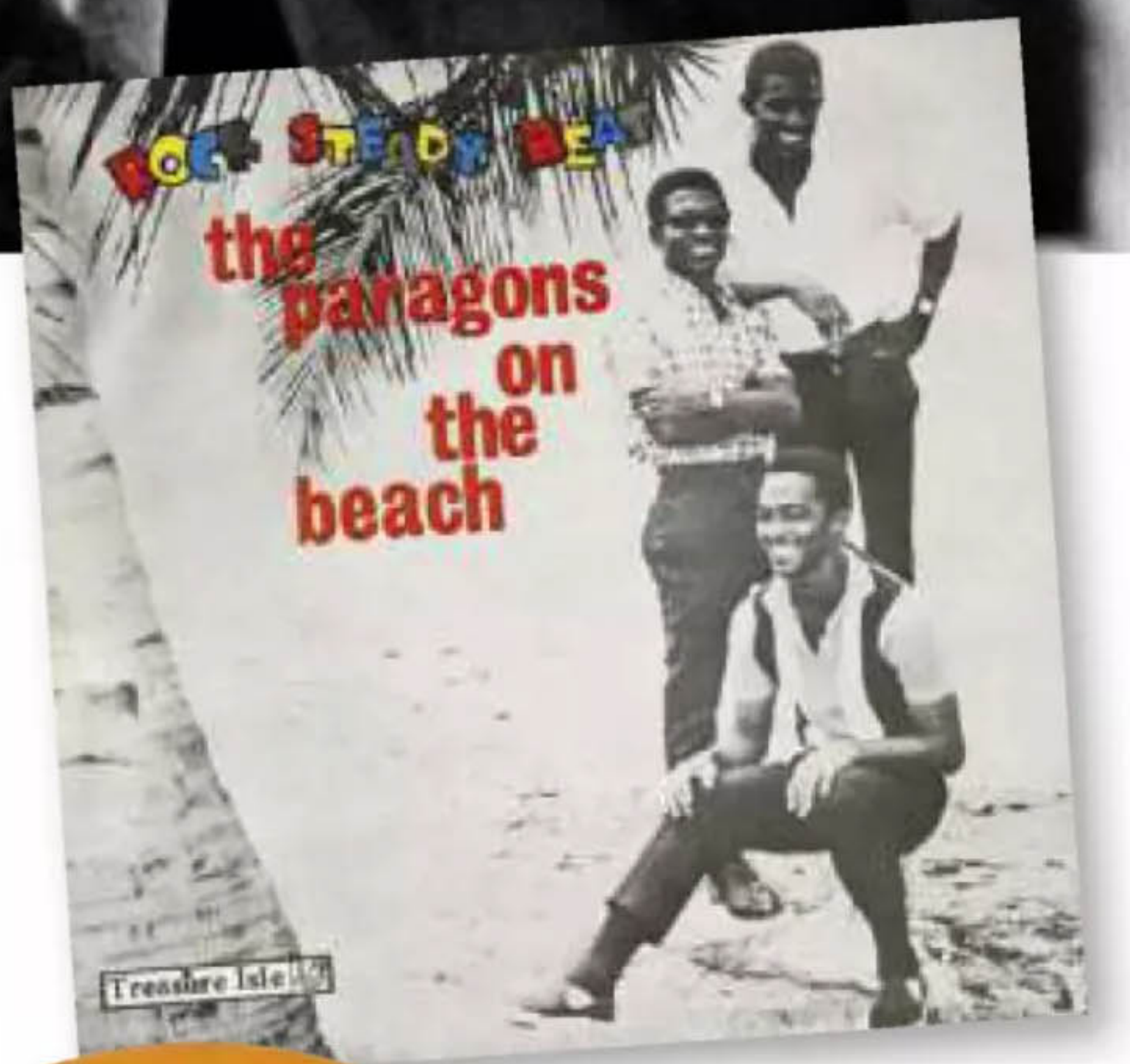
"Duke was a big fan of the smooth American singing groups like The Drifters or The Platters," said Brent Dowe. "There was never no ragged edges on a Duke Reid song."

Treasure Isle plunged headlong into the production of rocksteady tunes, some actually covers of Mayfield's group, including The Uniques' Queen Majesty and The Techniques' Gypsy Woman.

In the ensuing months, Reid hired in numerous other three-part-harmony providers – The Three Tops, The Jamaicans, Brent Dowe's Melodians and, perhaps best of all, The Paragons, who were led by a young John Holt, and scored high with On The Beach, The Tide Is High and Wear You To The Ball. Also top-ranking at the time: Alton Ellis, aka 'Mr Rock Steady'.

Desmond Dekker: wrested by Reid from producer Leslie Kong for a 'joke'.

Reid ruled them all with an iron fist. "Dennis Alcapone tells this story," says Steve Barrow, "where a session was meant to be going on, and they were all fucking about in the studio, smoking and laughing. Duke was downstairs, and he heard it all on his little speaker, so he went up there, got his gun out, took aim, and – boom! – fired at the skirting board. Everything went quiet and then Reid goes, 'Dem rats!' But it wasn't a rat, he just came up to the studio to focus people's attention on the job in hand. He was a man used to being obeyed."

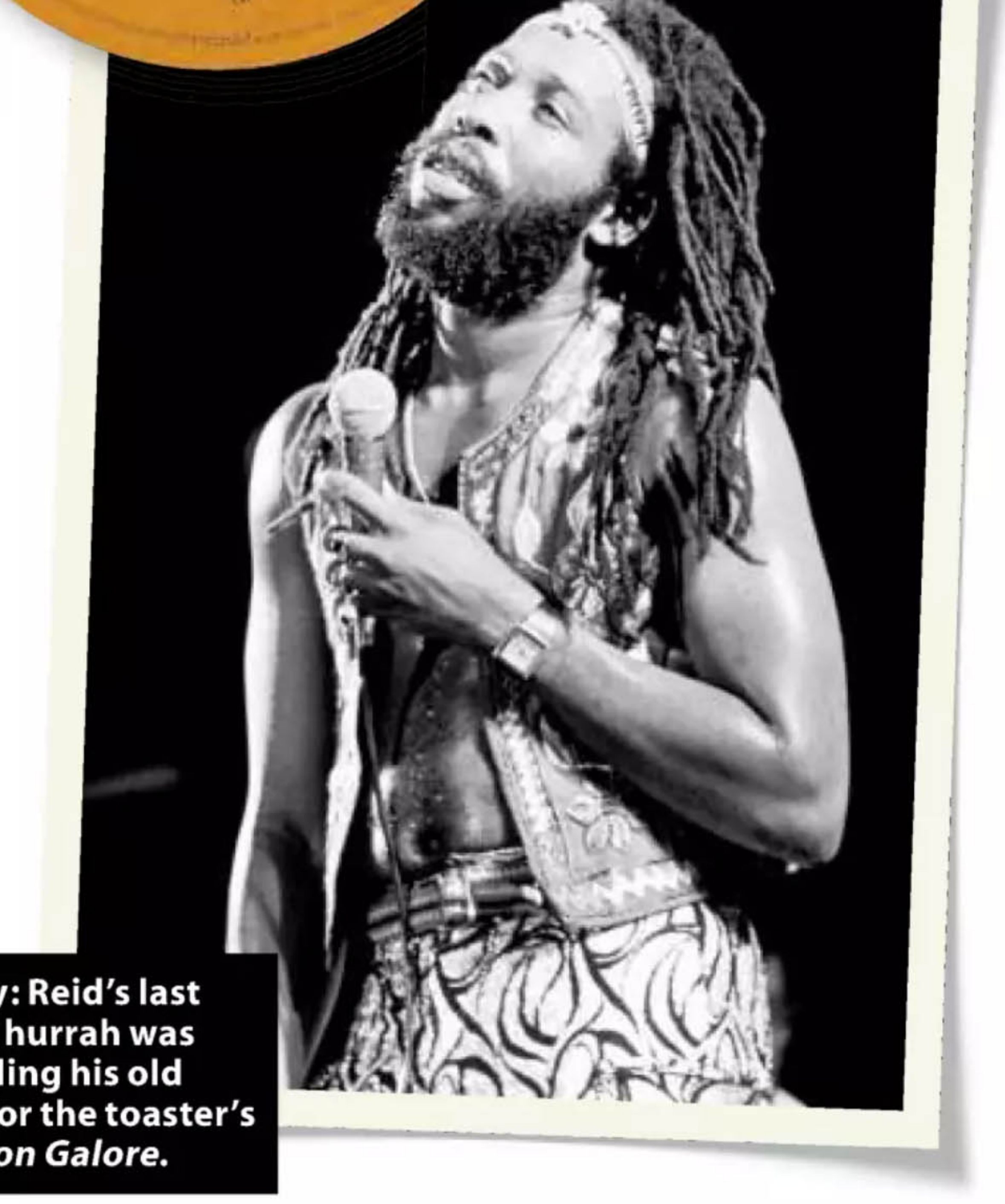


treasure isle
TI-7009 B
THE TIDE IS HIGH
THE PARAGONS
WITH TOMMY McCOOK and THE SUPERSONICS BAND

For two years, Reid ruled supreme in the Jamaican market – and beyond. Over in London, a label was launched almost solely to make Treasure Isle's music available to UK audiences. It was called Trojan, after Reid's sound system. He also opened an office in New York, on Broadway, as well as a brick works at home in Spanish Town.

Perhaps inevitably, with so many business interests, he quickly lost his grip on the Kingston music scene. He was not alive to various cultural shifts happening among his youthful audience. Rocksteady had become the soundtrack to a defiant and dangerous cult of nattily attired street urchins known as 'rude boys'.

Reid, the ex-cop, the conservative, wouldn't pander to them, while other producers happily serviced the trend with tunes begging them to calm down (see the Wailers' Simmer Down, for Studio One), or even glorifying their valour.



U-Roy: Reid's last great hurrah was recycling his old cuts for the toaster's *Version Galore*.

Soon, rocksteady gave way to a new sound, as the rhythm combos experimented further with that spacious 'one drop' groove. Enter the next great evolution in Jamaican music, reggae, which, even in its earliest incarnations, became emblematic of the new Rastafarian consciousness fomenting across Kingston. Reid had even less time for Rastas than he did for the rude boys. The more liberally minded Coxsone, by contrast, was happy to let his increasingly dreadlocked musos smoke their weed in his studio, so long as this resulted in interesting and marketable music.

Meanwhile, a new wave of 'auteur' producers such as Lee 'Scratch' Perry were making their presence felt. Reid could never have countenanced such devolvement of power.

SO, REID'S SUPREMACY WAS over almost as quickly as it had begun. Around the turn of the 1970s, amid the emerging DJ culture of toasting over old records, he enjoyed some success by recording Dennis Alcapone and, mostly notably, U-Roy's *Version Galore* album – all recycling his old rockstyeady rhythms. Soon after, Duke Reid disappeared from the scene as a producer. He had cancer, and after a protracted battle, he died in September 1976.

"Theo Beckford [of Easy Snappin' fame] talked about Duke Reid, saying that he was an ignorant man, a nasty vicious man," says Steve Barrow. "He would bully people, but" – and this just about sums up the great Arthur 'Duke' Reid – "he was a bad man who made some incredibly sweet music."

Special thanks to Lloyd Bradley, Noel Hawks, Colin Moore and Steve Barrow

Getty (2)

Marc Bolan
Manchester St
London, 1965

You're staring into the eyes of a future glam-rock superstar, but in October 1965 Marc Bolan was an unknown singer, recently signed to the Decca label. This shot was taken near his flat in Manchester Street, W1, by photographer David Wedgbury. Fame was still six years away...

Getty

THE HOME OF
THE BEATLES, STONES
AND MOTOWN

I ♥
Absolute Radio 60s

THE BEST 60s MUSIC
ON THE UK'S ONLY 60s
MUSIC STATION

NATIONWIDE ONLINE AND MOBILE

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

THE MAKERS OF **MOJO** PROUDLY PRESENT ISSUE THREE OF THE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

Also starring

HENDRIX BIRTH OF A LEGEND

JUDY COLLINS

THE 20 GREATEST '60s AMERICAN FOLK ALBUMS

Fred Neil / Judy Collins / Tim Buckley / Pete Seeger / Tom Paxton & More

THE PRETTY THINGS ARE TOO TOUGH TO DIE THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAM COOKE **THE TRUE STORY OF A TEEN-AGE OPERA** PRINCE BUSTER'S JAMAICAN REVOLUTION **WILLIAM BELL REMEMBERS MARTIN LUTHER KING** THE STRANGE STORY OF THE STRANGELOVES **RAY DAVIES' SUNNY AFTERNOON**

The Monkees

"WE MADE LONG HAIR COOL"

ISSUE 3 UK£7.99 US$15.99

9 771476 995978 14